Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network

NEWSLETTER

FALL/WINTER 2007

Rural Women: Networking In Spain

PENNSTATE College of Agricultural Sciences

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

On October 4-6, 2007, the XIV Encuentro Andaluz de Formacion Feminista met in Baeza, Andaluz, Spain. The focus of this year's meeting was Rural Women: Equal Opportunities in the New Rurality. After agreeing to give a keynote speech on women farmers and rural women's networks, I boarded a plane from Philadelphia to Madrid.

The train from Madrid to Jaen wound its way through flat and then rolling rural agricultural regions. Most of the field crops had been harvested and only a few animals were on pasture. Many of the beautiful old barns and houses stood empty and were in disrepair.

As we neared Jaen, the field crops gave way to olive groves. The short taxi ride from Jaen to Baeza took us through olive groves as far as the eye could see. This region is famous for specialty olives, which I later had many opportunities to sample and savor. The meeting was held at the amazing Centro de Formacion Feminista Carmen Burgos located in Baeza, a town perched on a ridge overlooking olive groves. This building, named after the famous feminist Carmen Burgos, was founded as a meeting place for the women of Andalusia. The cobblestone streets and buildings from the 12th to 15th centuries made for a fascinating setting to discuss rural women and the new rurality.

One hundred and fifty people gathered to listen, discuss, and strategize for improving rural women's lives. The mayor of Baeza welcomed everyone and proudly announced that they were naming a street in Baenza after a woman for the first time.

Perhaps most remarkable were the similarities of themes between the situation of rural women in Andalusia and Pennsylvania. For example, many young rural women described how their struggles of whether to leave or stay in rural areas.

Although many of these young women had a strong link to place, they were encouraged to leave as a way to have a better life. But now some of these young women are questioning these suggestions and are working with other women in dynamic networks and associations to improve rural women's livelihoods.

Networks are at the forefront of solutions for rural women. In Andalusia, rural women are creating new businesses and forming

(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*

FIELD DAYS

SOIL QUALITY WORKSHOP

Mary Barbercheck, Professor of Entomology at Penn State University, explains the importance of healthy soil.
—Photograph by Nigel Tudor

After nearly 30 years growing crops organically, Ron Gargasz's farm illustrates benefits to the soil from his agricultural practices. Through the use of cover crops, crop rotation, manure composting and selective tillage practices, Gargasz has improved the tilth and nutrient levels in the soil. He does not use herbicides and insecticides, but manages the pests through mechanical and environmentally-friendly practices. He farms about 200 acres and has an additional 80 acres of pasture.

Gargasz shared his insight with more than 30 people at a recent field day on his farm sponsored by the Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network (PA-WAgN) and the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA). He was raised on a dairy farm and learned agriculture as a boy before chemicals became a mainstay of the industry. Practices such as crop rotation, using manure for fertilizer, and cultivating out the weeds were a natural progression as Gargasz returned to organic production after 20 years in commercial agriculture.

Mary Barbercheck, Penn State Department of Entomology, engaged the participants in hands-on activities to evaluate the quality of the soil. She designed these activities to provide methods for farmers to evaluate the soil in the fields and gardens on their own operations.

She suggested putting soil samples from a field in a jar, adding water and shaking it, and then letting it settle. By observing the contents of the jar, participants can see the amount of organic matter in the sample. She also recommended laboratory testing to determine the nutrients and organic matter.

When farmers till the soil, more oxygen is incorporated into the soil, speeding up the activity of the microorganisms that break down organic matter.

"We want the organic matter to be broken down slowly over time," Barbercheck said. "That is another reason to be careful about your tillage." Barbercheck recommended that farmers consider "zone till" where only the soil in the strip where the seed will be planted is disturbed, the space between the rows is left in a cover crop or sod.

Cornell University has developed a soil health assessment that evaluates the quality of the organic matter in the soil. "There are two kinds of organic matter," Barbercheck said. These include stable organic matter that helps the soil hold water, like a sponge, but no longer provides nutrients to the soil, and there is active organic matter. Active organic matter is what feeds the microorganisms that release nutrients to the plants.

The Cornell soil health assessment is the first university-based analytical system that can help organic producers know the health of their soils based on the quality of organic matter.

In an exercise with the group, Barbercheck demonstrated the impact of compaction on the soil. In a simple drainage test, the participants observed the length of time it took for water to drain through a spot in the field.

Barbercheck also explained the importance of having neutral rather than too acidic or alkaline soil. Kits are available that help determine soil pH.

(Continued on page 12)

FIELD DAYS

IPM FOR GREENHOUSE GROWERS

August 8, 2007, the Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network (PA-WAgN), the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA), and Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Association joined together to present an Integrated Pest Management workshop for Greenhouse Growers at Still Pond Nursery in Berks County, Pennsylvania.

Workshop participants quickly forgot their discomforts on this sweltering summer evening when they entered Still Pond Nursery's pristine wholesale market. Being surrounded by beautiful, aromatic perennials reinforced my belief that we should not only garden to nourish our bodies but also to nourish our souls. At Still Pond Nursery, it is quite easy to understand why the green industry is booming in Pennsylvania.

Still Pond Nursery owner Kim Bechtle established the wholesale market in 1989 and continues to achieve success by providing high-quality container perennials to independent garden centers and landscapers in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

With the help of seasonal staff, Kim provides gentle, constant, and individualized care of each plant. Her attentiveness is quite evident in the abundance of healthy, sturdy perennials available. Kim does little formal advertising but has found that word-of-mouth has proven successful. She retains a strong customer base by offering reliable service, always mindful of customer requests. Kim explained the importance of researching upcoming trends in the green industry and providing new and interesting plants, along with long-time favorites, yearly.

For more information about Still Pond Nursery, visit: http://www.stillpondnursery.com.

Wade Espenshade, IPM/biocontrol Specialist with the Department of Entomology at Penn State University, presented IPM/biocontrol methods applicable for greenhouse growers. While directed at ornamental producers, many of the concepts applied to vegetable producers as well and several farmers with Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs took advantage of this workshop.

Wade identified common greenhouse insect pests and gave participants the opportunity to view collected specimens using hand lenses. The hands-on demonstration significantly increased participants ability to identify many common pests—which, as Wade explained, is the most important step in successfully implementing biocontrols.

Wade offered several biocontrol solutions to a variety of damaging insects. For an extensive list of insects and suggested biocontrols, Wade directed participants to the Pennsylvania Integrated Pest Management Program at Penn State University's College of Ag Science's website at http://paipm.cas.psu.edu/63.htm. He highly recommended obtaining *Greenhouse IPM with an Emphasis on Biocontrols,* available online at http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/FreePubs/pdfs/agrs96.pdf. Paperback books can be ordered by contacting Penn State's College of Ag Science Publication Distribution Center at 814-865-6713.

Wade advised that the use of residual insecticides should be stopped at least 90 days prior to the introduction of biocontrols. He presented keys to success such as proper identification of the pest, introduction of biocontrol at the proper life stage of the pest; introduction when the pest populations are low, continued monitoring of pest/predator balance, and reintroduction of biocontrol when necessary.

Wade recommends that transplants be isolated, plants and greenhouses be inspected weekly, yellow sticky cards be used to capture and identify pests (remove if introducing predatory controls), and the underside of leaves inspected if anything looks odd.

Wade offered information on a few biocontrol suppliers that have proven to be reliable and informative:

- The Green Spot, Ltd. http://www.anbp.org/Green%20Spot.htm
- International Technology Services, Inc. http://www.biobest.be/
- IPM Laboratories http://www.anbp.org/IPM%20Labs.htm
- Koppert Biological Systems http://www.koppert.nl/
- Syngenta Bioline http://www.anbp.org/b-novartis.htm.

Research has shown that the use of biocontrols can increase crop quality and yield, can lower production costs, and can reduce risks to workers and the environment.

Some entomologists have quipped, "Insects won't inherit the earth, they already own it." With this in mind, it may just be time to consider biocontrols!

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FIELD DAYS

FARMING ALTERNATIVES: YORK COUNTY FARM TOUR

The face of agriculture is changing. One of the most notable changes is that women owned farms are increasing. Many women farm owners rent their farms out but other women are searching for a viable way to earn income from the farm. A York County tour on September 26 focused on farming alternatives to increase profitability.

The Shearers demonstrate the benefits of the honor-system at their on-farm market
—Photograph by Ann Stone

Sponsored by Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network (PA-WAgN), the tour featured a dairy farm with a milk bottling plant and store, a rotational grazing operation offering pastured meats and eggs, and a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) organic vegetable farm that also offers entertainment and educational events.

The first stop at Swissland Acres in Glenrock, Pennsylvania, owned by Marc and Jenny Shearer, offered participants a chance to hear first-hand some of the problems and solutions involved in running a rotational grazing system for poultry, sheep and beef cattle.

Marc, an engineer, adapts and designs many of the mechanisms needed for a smooth operation. Of special interest were a plucker for the chickens and turkeys they raise, butcher and market on the farm. The plucker, with several large plastic buckets for rinsing bird carcasses, shows how simple and efficient a poultry processing facility can be on the farm.

Despite his apparent expertise in machine shop design, Marc encouraged beginners, "You don't need a fortune to get into this. You can use what you have." That is what Marc does when reusing old wood, rebuilding equipment, installing solar panels to warm the chicken house during winter, and establishing a simple compost pile for poultry entrails.

Farmers can process birds to sell without a permit under the 20,000-bird exemption the state allows. We sell chickens as fast as we can butcher them," Marc said. More and more they are receiving customer requests to purchase chicken feet and even heads, primarily for ethnic markets.

One of the goals of PA-WAgN is to offer mentoring, which was evident in the sharing of much practical information for people searching for methods to make agriculture more profitable.

Marc showed how he constructed a simple brooder house platform reusing wood and installing two heat lamps beneath it. No thermostat is needed and the setup allows peeps to run in and out for their comfort level. The design cut back fatalities from overheating, but trouble from rats

Rob Wood guides field day participants on a tour of Spoutwood's CSA production fields.
—Photograph by Ann Stone

developed. Marc solved the rat problem by pouring a pad of concrete and setting a metal ring around it. The rats do not jump over the ring and they cannot dig underneath

(Continued on page 7)

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FIELD DAYS

POULTRY PROCESSING AT FRIENDS FARM

Do you know how to kill a chicken humanely, and scald, clean, and cut up the bird? If that's a skill you think you'll never need, read no further. But if you raise and process pastured poultry, like hundreds of farmers in Pennsylvania, we missed you at our recent poultry processing workshop.

In August, PA-WAgN members met at Friends Farm in Blair County where host farmers Chris Wise and John Favinger demonstrated their immaculate poultry processing area with killing cones, scalder, and electric plucker. Farmers came from as far away as New York, Ohio, and Maryland to see Friends Farm and learn how to butcher chickens.

Left: Workshop participants observe humane and efficient poultry processing at Friends Farm in Blair County. Above: Rita Wise-Favinger demonstrates the importance of properly removing entrails. —Photographs by Linda Moist

Small-scale poultry processing is common in the Northeast due to the popularity of pastured poultry among consumers and farmer-friendly state laws. "We never have any difficulty selling our chickens," John said. "Many people will buy only pastured poultry because they consider it to be better tasting and healthier, and think that raising chickens on grass is a more humane production method." Adding pastured poultry as another farm enterprise can be profitable for Pennsylvania farmers, he said, because very little is required in the way of investment to get started, and because on-farm processing of up to 20,000 birds is permitted by law.

"I'm planning to raise several batches of Cornish broilers next summer for the customers at my farm market," one participant said. "I've attended workshops that discussed poultry processing, but never one where I could actually butcher a chicken myself. Although it's not a task I relish, it's necessary and I'm glad for the hands-on opportunity to learn."

Blair County Extension Educator Sharon McDonald was on hand to discuss food safety, and the ways to circumvent bacterial contamination of the poultry. She advised participants to wash their hands carefully with soap, scrubbing for at least 30 seconds. "Bacteria are found on all raw poultry," she said. "These bacteria can cause serious illness, and are only killed in the meat by cooking it to 170 degrees. Therefore, it's important to prevent cross-contamination of raw poultry with other foods that are eaten raw, like salads. Keep your cutting boards and knives scrupulously clean, wash them in a bleach solution, and use them only for cutting up chicken."

After everyone had a chance to butcher and clean a few birds under their guidance, Chris and John explained how pasturing poultry fits into their entire farm operation. Participants were treated to a tour of the farm and Friends Farm Market, where the family sells their fresh vegetables, eggs, poultry, and meats.

The post-and-beam construction market building, which John built in 2006, is an impressive addition to the farm. It contains a licensed kitchen that makes it possible for the family to host harvest dinners throughout the summer and fall. "Many of our chickens are served here at our dinners," Chris said, "and some are purchased by our CSA and market customers. So we are direct marketing the poultry and adding value through the dinners as well."

If you would like to learn more about pastured poultry production and processing, you may contact the American Pastured Poultry Association: http://www.apppa.org/. The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service also has some great online resources for small-scale poultry processors: www.attra.ncat.org/livestock.html#Poultry.

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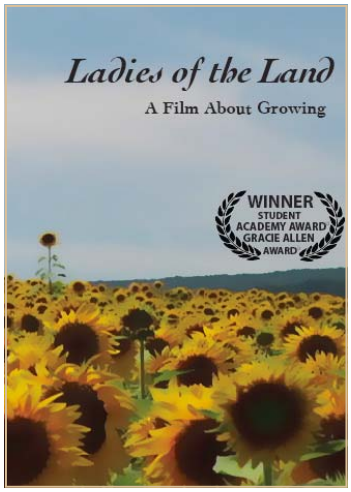
AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY

HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING IDEA



Award-Winning Documentary Features PA-WAgN

GET YOUR COPY NOW – A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY GIFT!

Three PA-WAgN farming members are featured in *Ladies of the Land*, a new documentary on the rising number of women in agriculture. The film also includes expert interviews with PA-WAgN founders Amy Trauger, Ph.D., and Carolyn Sachs, Ph.D.

Ladies of the Land profiles Kim Tait of Tait Farm Foods, Lyn Garling of Over the Moon Farm, and Elly Hushour of Patches of Star Dairy, who all illustrate the joyous, but challenging, process of growing and delivering food to America's tables.

Trauger and Sachs provide commentary and perspective throughout the film on the trend of more women becoming farmers, the kinds of agriculture they are doing, and the unique challenges they face.

The film also explains how PA-WAgN started, and contains scenes from the October 2006 Women in Transition Day at Sandy Crawford's dairy farm in Bradford County, PA.

The film won a student Academy Award, a Gracie Allen Award, and is currently on tour with the Rural Route Film Festival. It will also screen in January at the Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival in Nevada City, CA.

Megan Thompson, who now shoots and produces for the show *NOW* on PBS, made the film for her master's thesis at New York University. Her brother Andy, a Minneapolis-based composer, wrote the original score. Amy Trauger provided invaluable guidance, information and support throughout the film's production.

Copies of the film are available for purchase at www.ladiesofthelandmovie.com. Contact Megan at megan@ladiesofthelandmovie.com with any comments or questions.



PA-WAgN farmers featured in *Ladies of the Land:*

Left to Right: **Kim Tait** of Tait Farm Foods, http://www.taitfarmfoods.com

Lyn Garling of Over the Moon Farm, http://www.overthemoonfarm.com

Ellie Hushour of Patches of Star Dairy, details available at http://www.newfarm.org/features/2005/0905/patchesofstar/kimbleevans.shtml

FIELD DAYS:
FARMING ALTERNATIVES: YORK COUNTY FARM TOUR

(Continued from page 4)
the concrete. Ironically, they discovered that one of the best defenses against rats is an attack rooster on site.

The Shearers use their fields for rotational grazing of poultry, sheep and beef cattle, which are also sold from their farm for pastured meat. It took nine years for the fields to become satisfactory grassy pasture through organic methods.

In establishing a customer base, Jenny said of prime importance is to meet with the customer the first time to educate them on the methods used for raising nutritional eggs and meat and to explain their self-service system.

Three large refrigerator-freezers are installed in a building for customers to help themselves and pay through an honor system.

Donna & Tom Perry demonstrate the milking system at Perrydell Dairy Farm
–Photograph by Ann Stone

"Our customers are making a choice for better products," Jenny said. "They are pleased to find someone raising birds and meat the way we do."

The second stop was Spoutwood Farm, Glen Rock, owned by Rob and Lucy Wood. Spoutwood has offered a CSA for 10 years, but Wood estimates the CSA provides only 25 percent of needed income to sustain the 26-acre farm.

They have 100 members for the three-acre plot grown with organic vegetables. The Woods offer special events to reconnect people with the land. An annual May Day Fairie Festival draws 15,000 people in attendance. The expansive schedule is filled with events that attract children, and therefore families for attendance. A Mother-Earth Harvest Day, conducted the end of each September, offers a country flavor with workshops pertaining to sustainable living and reconnecting people with the land and nature.

Perrydell Dairy Farm, York, operated by families spanning three-generations, started in 1923. In 1963, a milk bottling and ice cream plant was installed and the products were sold at their on-farm store. They expanded the store and plant 12 years ago.

Tom and Donna Perry believe that building a relationship with customers is paramount in successful marketing. For that reason they allow customers to wander into the area where the calves and cows are housed. Petting the calves is encouraged despite the risk associated with kids touching the animals and not washing their hands before touching their mouths.

"We don't want to stop it, because we believe it's what makes our operation successful," Lucy said. "It brings families so much joy, and us too, to hear their children's squeals of delight."

During the tour, Lucy's assessment of the value of this perk was confirmed by a mother with three children who were petting the calves and running around the open spaces. "This is our second home, I always say," the mother said. "Everytime we come to buy milk, we come to pet the calves," she said. "The children wouldn't miss it."

Her husband said that questions about the farm have changed in recent years. Now, many parents asked if hormones are used for milk production and if the animals are grazed. Their questions appear to show educated awareness of today's issues, but they often reveal how little they know by asking the third question: "Which cows give chocolate milk?"

The Perrys take these questions in stride, and believe that to be profitable, a farm must be customer friendly.

Donna said the county's visitor's bureau has been the best advertisement to draw people to their farm. It has given them media attention in addition to tourist customers.

Lou Ann Good
Lancaster Farming

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GOING LOCAL

THE CONFESSIONS OF A LOCAL FOODS CITIZEN-EATER

This month's installment of ravings from your local citizen eater is on the subject of doing it better.

So my life changes just don't seem to stop. I moved to a new home this fall and made the best of harvesting and preserving my prolific, generous and excessively large garden (what *was* I thinking?) in the middle of packing boxes. Moving boxes filled with quart jars of tomatoes was a questionably logical choice, at least one I questioned in the moments of packing, lifting, stacking, carrying, loading, unloading, unpacking and re-storing. But, I made the best of it and a couple weekends ago, I dug out about 125 pounds of potatoes and transported them an hour one-way to my new home, wondering at various moments involving a lot of heavy lifting, do these activities fall in the category of sustainable? Chiropractically, definitely not. Economically, not necessarily. Socially, probably. Environmentally, maybe. I don't know. Why do I think about these things?

Potatoes and Butternut Squash in Storage
–Photograph courtesy of Amy Trauger

This fall I am teaching a class on environmental sustainability and am torturing my students with making and refining a definition of sustainability. Carrying on in the fine tradition of professors everywhere, I haven't actually done this exercise myself. But schlepping over a hundred pounds of potatoes from old garden to new basement gave me plenty of time to think about it. How DO we balance all these factors equally and still get things done and keep our sanity at the same time? I have a new appreciation for science, as all these factors (gas mileage of my car, food miles of conventional potatoes, cost of local potatoes) could be measured, quantified and calculated (probably not my sanity) if I only knew how and/or cared to devote time to doing the math. And then I would know if I was contributing to climate change or not. Maybe. But the whole exercise is really just moot because I don't have a good place to store my bumper crop of potatoes. The best place I have (and have ever had) is the basement of my new house. But in spite of my best efforts, my German Butterballs are *already* volunteering next years' crop with green sprouts from their beady little eyes. The true meaning of sustainability lies in storage.

And this is one way we can do it better. Given enough tillable ground, horse manure, and elbow grease, I, with seriously weird enthusiasm for someone in my generation, love to grow my own potatoes. Red ones and pink ones and purple ones and white ones and yellow ones and buttery ones and starchy ones and waxy ones; and ones for potato salad, and breakfast, and roasting, and *osso bucco* when my sweetie is in town. But, I have a heck of a time storin' 'em. They freeze, rot or sprout and it frustrates me to no end because I really, really, really, really love potatoes. But I really, really, really don't want to eat 125 pounds in 4 weeks, or I will weigh 300 pounds in no time. My options are sort of limited without making big outlays of capital for a climate- controlled potato storage facility. I'm pretty sure, however, there is a better way to integrate my needs and the needs of my potatoes with the needs of my community.

As I understand it, potatoes need to be cool (almost cold), in a very dark place and mostly dry. When it's 70 degrees one day and 25 the next in this new era of erratic weather, it's kind of hard to control those variables. Some farmers do it though, and I want to know their secrets! Better yet, I want to buy a share in their potato storage facility and store my potatoes at their farm. I would pay a monthly rate during the storage season and come get a pound or two of my taters every week. If I'm making the trip, I would gladly pay to store my onions, squash, carrots, and garlic, so that I could pick them up too. I would also happily buy a gallon or so of yogurt, a pound of cheese, a frozen chicken and I would pay a premium to grow fresh greens if there was a hoophouse in which to plant my seeds. It would be a new kind of CSA. I grow it, you house it. Or it could be a new kind of retail. I, and all my friends pay for the overhead and the labor, you just make sure the product is there when we show up to get it. Or a new kind of community center. I pool

(Continued on page 9)

GOING LOCAL: THE CONFESSIONS OF A LOCAL FOODS CITIZEN-EATER

(Continued from page 8)

my resources with all the other potato growing lunatics and we invest in a place to store our bounty and work together to nurture and gather our harvest all year long.

This facility could also have processing and storing facilities, such as a certified kitchen and freezers so us maverick gardeners with more produce than we know what to do with, and other crazies who like to store food for the winter instead of buying it fresh from Argentina could work together to feed ourselves. What a revolutionary idea to mingle the capital and labor of citizen-eaters with the labor and capital of citizen-farmers in their spaces, on our shared and negotiated terms. And specifically not on the terms of the retail giants who profit mightily by making sure we don't think we're in this together. Of course, I could just join a CSA with potato storage and give up on my Butterballs, but I *like* growing them. It's more satisfying than most of my other vices, and gives me a sense of goodness and rightness in the world that I'm not sure I can do without.

Ask any child who has dug potatoes for the first time. There isn't anything that compares to the magic of digging up a dozen golden eggs from the mysterious depths of the warm and generous earth. And it all came from that little chunk of shriveled tater you cut up and threw in the ground last spring when the oak leaves were just a twinkle in the eye of their wise old mama.

Dream, create, inspire. Meet me at the potato cooler.

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IS YOUR SAFETY NET INTACT?

Farming is one of the most dangerous occupations in the United States. Because over 150,000 farm workers are injured on the job every year, farmers should protect themselves against the loss of income that could result from a disabling accident. Married women farmers are often particularly vulnerable because few are eligible for Social Security Disability payments if they are become disabled.

Married women farmers often file income taxes jointly with their husbands, and never realize that all of the social security tax is being paid in their husband's name. When they report all of their income under the husband's name alone, they pay all of the income tax and social security tax in his name as well. While it may seem as though they are eliminating extra paperwork, they are in fact overlooking some very important issues.

In this situation, they are not eligible to collect Social Security Disability Insurance. The woman farmer working in a family-operated business with no off-farm job cannot collect SSDI if she becomes disabled unless she has reported farm income and paid Social Security in her name.

A disabled woman farmer might be able to collect Supplemental Security Income (SSI), another type of disability insurance established for people who have never worked, or who have not worked enough to obtain 40 work credits over the past ten years. However, there are income limits for SSI, and married women must report their husband's income as well, which is likely to make them ineligible for SSI disability benefits.

To make sure that both husband and wife are covered under Social Security Disability, the couple can create a partnership and divide farm income between both partners. When both partners pay Social Security, both are eligible for disability benefits, retirement benefits, and survivors' benefits as well, which would help provide for minor children in case of the death of either parent.

Either spouse could receive a paycheck as a regular employee of the business. This would also ensure disability, retirement, and survivor benefits. Another option is to buy private disability and life insurance for the spouse who is not paying into Social Security, and contribute to a retirement account.

It's also important to establish work records for other family members who help on the farm for the same reasons. Minor children who become disabled can collect SSDI through their parents' Social Security record. After they become adults, they must qualify on their own. If they have been paid in cash, they have no payment record on which to base their claims.

Farming is a risky business, and one never knows what the future may hold. It is best to be prepared.

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MEET YOUR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

JUNE HERTZLER

June Hertzler, PA-WAgN Regional Representative
—Photograph by Ann Stone

June Hertzler is a PA-WAgN Regional Representative in the South Central region. She was raised on a dairy farm in Lancaster County where her contributions included milking; gathering, cleaning and packaging eggs; and assisting in the maintenance of large gardens. During high-school, June was employed at a local fruit and vegetable farm because, as June laughingly explains, "I needed a paid job to support my horse." She continued working evenings and weekends at the vegetable farm while attending Lancaster General School of Nursing, where she secured a 3-year diploma.

While attending nursing school, June met her husband Duane and they were married soon after graduation. They merged with Duane's family to form Moo-Echo Dairy in 1972. June launched her nursing career, working full-time as a pediatric nurse, but remained very involved in farm activities and management. She gradually decreased her off-farm hours with the birth of each child and eventually remained home and on the farm full-time.

Lacking room for expansion at their initial location, the Hertzlers purchased 212 acres in 1978 in Perry County, Pennsylvania. They brought a herd of 70 milking cows and some machinery with them. They constructed a free-stall barn and milking parlor. June explained the design as being a perfect set-up for her and Duane to work together with babies in nearby playpens.

In 1989, June reentered the workforce and continued her work in healthcare until her recent retirement. Now she enjoys her part-time farming responsibilities which include calf care and quality control.

The Hertzlers initially followed a conventional dairy structure, which proved to be very labor intensive. They struggled to improve nutrient-poor soil and experienced droughts and financial strains. In 1994, following the example of a farming friend and extensive research, the Hertzlers decided to transition to an intensive grazing system. "It was not an overnight process. We had to build fences, add paddocks, and create viable water sources," June recalled. They continued to increase their herd to its current size of 270 dairy cows and approximately 250 young stock.

At one point, June and Duane's children had no desire to return to the farm because the conventional methods were too labor-intensive and lacked adequate financial rewards. However, soon after transitioning to a grazing system, one of their sons welcomed the opportunity to farm full-time. The Hertzlers are now anticipating a semi-retirement. "We will always have cows and work on the farm but we do plan to slow down and allow the next generation to take on more responsibilities. We are working on estate planning, making it possible for our son to buy us out and take over the farm," June explains. The Hertzlers sell their milk through Mt. Joy Dairy Cooperative but hope to initiate direct-sales. "We hope to obtain a raw milk license and may market pastured beef in the future," June said.

As a PA-WAgN Regional Representative, June serves as a mentor to anyone interested in dairy farming and she advises that future dairy farmers consider a grazing system. June explained that start-up is significantly easier for a young person if he/she chooses grazing methods. "It requires less equipment and a new and beginning farmer can start small by building an inexpensive New Zealand parlor. Profitability can be

(Continued on page 11)

RURAL WOMEN: NETWORKING IN SPAIN

(Continued from page 1)
associations and networks to increase the success of their businesses. Women run about 25% of new businesses in Andalusia. However, women entering business face many obstacles: they lack training; they have little experience in running businesses; they are not always supported by their families; and they are expected to take care of their families.

Women farmers, government officials, and NGO representatives spoke about the success of women's networks in rural areas. These vibrant networks of rural women support women's empowerment, provide training, increase the visibility of women's businesses, and provide opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.

Another theme was the greening of agriculture and women's role in ecological agricultural. Many speakers mentioned that women were more involved in ecological agriculture than traditional agriculture.

New European policies for rural development emphasize the need to stem migration from rural areas. The new strategies include a gender mainstreaming approach that attempts to increase rural women's employment, provide funding to integrate gender into rural development efforts, and focus specifically on the needs of women and young people. However, various speakers pointed out that these goals cannot be easily met without pushing a feminist agenda and attempting to change the male dominated agricultural associations and cooperatives.

Women have a fundamental role in changes in rural areas. Rural women demanded the European Union, Spain, Andalusia, and local government support networks to empower rural women. Rural women in Andalusia and Pennsylvania have much in common despite differences in our histories, types of agriculture, and government support.

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MEET YOUR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE–JUNE HERTZLER

(Continued from page 10)
even higher if a farmer is certified organic and if they can avoid purchasing feed," June advises.

June recommends that new and beginning dairy farmers do their research and visit many models before deciding what will work best for them. And she advises that they subscribe to *Graze*, a mid-east publication that features farmers' stories, providing insight into successful grazing systems.

June envisions agricultural education beginning at the elementary level and she directs educators to an online series available to third and fourth graders at http://www.discoverdairy.com. Moo-Echo Dairy is one of three farms highlighted in the online segments.

With extensive farming knowledge and experience in both conventional and grazing systems, June offers a great deal of insight into dairy farming. As an active leader in the PA-WAgN network, June continues to support women in agriculture by developing farm tours and field days in the South Central Region.

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***GRAZE* IS A MONTHLY PUBLICATION DEVOTED TO PROMOTING MANAGEMENT-INTENSIVE GRAZING AND FAMILY-SCALE LIVESTOCK FARMS. TO SUBSCRIBE OR FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS, VISIT: http://www.grazeonline.com**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

LOOK FOR PA-WAGN'S COMPLETE 2008 FIELD DAY AND WORKSHOP SCHEDULE ON THE WEB IN JANUARY AT http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Calendar.html.

HERE IS A SNEAK PEAK AT SOME OF THE EVENTS WE ARE PLANNING:

February
MAPLE SYRUP PRODUCTION
Northeast, PA

May—June
WORKSHOP SERIES ON GRASS-FED LAMB
- Direct marketing pastured lamb to consumers and restaurants at Jamison Farm in Latrobe
- Comparing production methods for pastured meat goats and sheep in Bedford County

June-July
WORKSHOP SERIES ON HANDS-ON ANIMAL SHELTER CONSTRUCTION
- Building portable animal shelters for small ruminants at Painted Hand Farm in Cumberland County
- Building a chicken house for laying hens in Perry County

July
HOLISTIC, INTEGRATED (AND FRUGAL) SMALL FARM MANAGEMENT
So' Journey Farm in Greene County

September
ARTISAN CHEESE FIELD DAY SERIES
- Farmstead Cheesemaking in Chester County
- Artisan Cheese Tour in Perry and Juniata County Counties

FIELD DAYS: SOIL QUALITY WORKSHOP

(Continued from page 2)

Barbercheck recommended that producers interested in pasture management and other sustainable practices visit http://attar.ncat.org, the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service. Materials can also be obtained by calling the toll-free number 800-346-9140. The person who answers the phone will work with the farmer calling to be sure that useful information is sent. It is free from this USDA agency.

During a PA-WAgN tour of the farm, Gargasz explained how he controlled weeds in his soybeans by cultivating twice before the crop became too high. The soybean plants shade the rows, which keeps the weeds from returning. He also showed the storage he had for specialty grains such as spelt and buckwheat which he is able to sell these to a nearby mill. The spelt is becoming popular with people on gluten-restricted diets.

Gargasz raises Angus and Limousin cattle that he believes convert the grasses to quality beef. The lunch, catered by a nearby restaurant, served meat and sweet corn raised by Gargasz.

Also at the field day, Bill Chess, Lawrence County extension educator, explained the new pasture and hay crop insurance program. Pennsylvanian is participating in two pilot programs to see how these forage risk-management programs will work.

Chess used figures from Gargasz's farm to illustrate the benefit of the program during dry years.

Carol Ann Gregg
Lancaster Farming

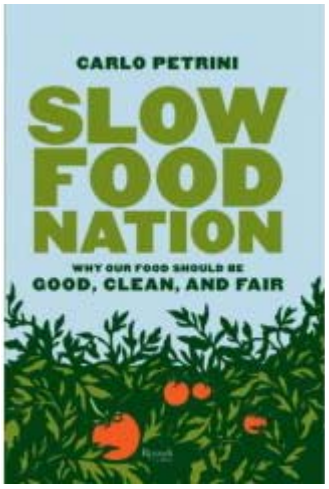
This article has been reprinted with permission from *Lancaster Farming*. The original article, as it appeared in *Lancaster Farming,* can be viewed in the August 25, 2007, issue.

DO YOU WANT TO SUPPORT PA-WAGN ACTIVITIES?

Send a check or money order to PA-WAgN, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, 102 Armsby Building, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802.

BOOK REVIEW

SLOW FOOD NATION: WHY OUR FOOD SHOULD BE GOOD, CLEAN & FAIR



Perhaps if I had been able to read Petrini's book *Slow Food Nation: Why Our Food Should be Good, Clean and Fair*, in its original Italian, I might have more respect for the ideas. After all, they are the ideas of Carlo Petrini, the founder of Slow Food, a movement to which PA-WAgN and many of its members have some strong connections and why I requested it for review. We also owe to his ideas some of the cultural turn toward consumption of local and artisanal food. The translation of his ideas, however, does not make for an accessible and pleasurable read. Perhaps, as it should be. Perhaps one needs to chew over the ideas slowly and thoughtfully. Perhaps some of his philosophy for slowly chewing over our choices of food and agricultural production methods has come through this prose to actually physically slow the reader down. In any case, dear reader, you have been warned, and schedule time accordingly if you pick up this book.

The central concern of the book is whether and how food can be good, clean, and fair. Once we have developed ways to produce food that meet all three criteria, we will have developed a new *gastronomy* (also known as the "laws of the stomach"). The new gastronomy advocated by Petrini is one which adheres faithfully to traditional methods and a certain standard of quality ("good"); produces food in environmentally friendly ways ("clean"); and revitalizes communities through economically supporting farmers and workers ("fair"). At this point you may be wondering, as I did, why we need to invent a new kind of word or idea to describe what so many of you are already doing and do every day with or without any kind of fancy labels to make you feel better about it. Perhaps it sounds better in Italian. Petrini does explain the connections between how we influence how food is produced through what we do or do not let into our stomach, but it would take a most discerning consumer to relate the tasty morsel on the fork at the table to the day-to-day mucking about with a pitchfork in the fields of food production.

I had heard in advance of reading the book that Petrini had taken issue with organic farmers in California, referring to them as elitist. (Kettles and pots calling each other names suddenly comes to mind.) And yes, there is a moment in the book when Petrini questions the truly good intentions of an organic farmer/surfer who sold enough of his expensive olive oil in a few months to take the rest of the year off and play in the ocean. Petrini bemoans the "hectares of olive trees" growing over "what he must have uprooted and cleared away" that thrive in the name of "organic" to finance this guy's vacation. Thus, this was probably "good" olive oil in terms of quality, questionably "fair", but certainly not "clean." One wonders then, for whom is food good, clean and fair? The situation seems good, clean and fair for this farmer who farms with methods we've accepted as environmentally friendly and who enjoys a rewarding livelihood and a carefree life with his family. It seems that Petrini would like a lower price, olive trees competing with chaparral and a bit more work from this farmer, perhaps? This moment reveals the essential weakness of the book, and something unspoken that runs throughout all its pages. A classic problem of agriculture is that farmers are "price takers" and not "price makers," meaning they have to take whatever the market will bear for a product. When they set the price, as this farmer did, they violate some essential law of ethical "gastronomy". Petrini advocates a new way of eating, but is oblivious to the fact that when food policy is established on a value chain that travels backward from the discerning mouth of the consumer to the farm, farmers everywhere and always have been the ones to

(Continued on page 14)

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PA-WAgN IS CONDUCTING A SURVEY OF WOMEN FARMERS

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

BOOK REVIEW
SLOW FOOD NATION: WHY OUR FOOD SHOULD BE GOOD, CLEAN & FAIR

(Continued from page 13)
lose.

It's not that Petrini doesn't seem to know farmers. The strength of the book is in its exploration of good gastronomic practice all over the world. Petrini covers a lot of territory and explores the "network of gastronomes" from Chiapas to Samiland. In all these places, different food cultures and economies work in their own gloriously diverse ways to produce good food, sustainable livelihoods and environmental benefits. And in all the places he visits (most of the time his own projects) he praises the work of gastronomes who grow and process traditional foods using good, clean and fair methods. Learning from their experiences also encouraged Petrini to rethink the passivity of "consumption," He wants us to use a new word for consumers: "co-producers." This suggests that we can rectify some of the social, economic and environmental problems of agriculture by having consumers become part of the process of production, such as they are in Community Supported Agriculture models.

In spite of some flaws, Petrini has some very good things to say. About the importance of consumer knowledge of food production. About the productivity of creating social networks to make the world a better place. About the value of reclaiming traditional methods. About the power of consumers rejecting the injustice and inhumanity of industrial food production. His ideas are good; we've just heard a lot of them all before. And I'm not sure he's made a good case for being an expert on what YOU eat. Or what YOU produce. Or how y'all might work it out together in the privacy of your own community. I think Petrini is getting there, he just trips over himself in the process. And we don't really need him to tell us how to do it. We're already doing it. And we probably don't need fond recollections, fancy new words and trips 'round the world to help us do it better.

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THE KITCHEN GARDEN

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Brussels Sprouts top the nutritional charts, containing high amounts of Vitamins K & C, and are a good source of Vitamin A, manganese, dietary fiber, folate, and many other essential vitamins and minerals. But the most significant health benefit may be the disease fighting qualities of this cruciferous vegetable. Current research suggests that the phytochemicals that naturally occur in Brussels sprouts protect against cancer and assist in detoxifying the body.

Although slow-growing, Brussels Sprouts are relatively easy to produce in the home garden. Transplant into the garden in late-spring or early-summer, top dress with a well-composted manure, and water regularly to maintain vigorous growth.

Harvest when the sprouts are firm and approximately 1-inch in diameter, preferably after a few mild frosts in early to late fall. Early-winter harvests are possible when conditions remain mild.

I love Brussels sprouts. My family loves Brussels sprouts. But, unfortunately, many people have developed a severe disdain for this super-food, possibly due to overcooking, which leaches out many nutrients and almost all of the delicate sweetness. But, considering their many valuable qualities and an abundance of recipes that enhance Brussels Sprouts' finer flavors, it just may be time to give them another try. The key is to not overcook them.

Brussels sprouts offer a wonderful addition to every-day meals. Simply trim, halve, toss with olive oil and roast in a shallow baking dish in a preheated 425°F oven for approximately 30 minutes to allow natural sugars to caramelize. When combined with pearl onions, garlic, shallots, toasted nuts, balsamic vinegar, or other flavor enhancers, Brussels Sprouts become a welcome and attractive Holiday favorite.

When fresh-from-the-garden products are at a minimum, Brussels sprouts stand tall and proud in the garden, ready to contribute a fresh-picked option to any meal. So I encourage you, even if you aren't a fan, to add these baby cabbages to your menu.

In good health and in good taste, I wish you all the best this Holiday season!

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ROASTED BRUSSELS SPROUTS, PEARL ONIONS, AND CHESTNUTS

1 1/2 pounds Brussels sprouts, ends trimmed and yellow leaves removed, halved
¾ pounds pearl onions
¾ pounds chestnuts
6 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons fresh minced rosemary (optional)
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400°F

Bring a medium saucepan of water to a boil. Add pearl onions and boil for 1 minute. Drain. Let stand until cool enough to handle, then carefully peel, leaving root and stem ends intact.

Using a paring knife, cut a large X into the bottom of each chestnut shell. Arrange on a baking pan in a single layer, cut end up. Roast in preheated oven until tender, 30-35 minutes. Immediately remove and discard shells, keeping chestnuts whole if possible.

Combine trimmed & halved Brussels sprouts, peeled pearl onions, peeled chestnuts, olive oil, rosemary (optional), sea salt, and freshly ground black pepper. Toss to combine. Pour onto a baking sheet and place on center oven rack.

Roast in preheated oven for 30-45 minutes, stirring gently every 8-10 minutes for even browning. Reduce heat if necessary to prevent burning. Brussels sprouts will be very dark, almost black, when done.

Adjust seasoning with additional salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

LEARNING TO APPRECIATE BRUSSELS SPROUTS

According to a survey in 2002, Brussels sprouts were Britain's most hated vegetable; however, in 2005, a poll of 2,000 people named sprouts as Britain's 5th favorite vegetable.

This project was supported by the National Research Initiative of the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, USDA, Grant # 2005-55618-15910.

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