

Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2009

PA-WAGN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SMALL FARM CLUSTERS PROJECT

PENNSTATE



College of
Agricultural
Sciences

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Over the past couple years, PA-WAgN has been participating in the Small Farms Clusters (SFC) Project, as a way to gain insight into how PA-WAgN as a group is meeting some of its goals, particularly related to how members interact with each other, leadership, and impact on members' business and production practices. Here is an update from the project, providing preliminary survey results from the south-central region. We will be contacting those who did not respond to our previous mailing, asking them to complete the survey, so that the information will truly represent the thoughts and opinions of all PA-WAgN members in the south-central region.



The SFC Project examines how and why localized groups of farmers come together, and how participation in these agricultural clusters affects farmers and the wider community. Agricultural clusters are groups of farms and related businesses in a geographic area that are connected to each other through business and social relationships. In addition, clusters often include supportive organizations and agencies, such as university extension. Agricultural clusters facilitate the exchange of information and ideas among farmers who share similar interests and objectives.

Clusters provide access to cutting edge information and to the knowledge and experience of other

farmers. Clusters often provide a social support network and a sense of community. In some cases the cluster provides a way to coordinate marketing and/or purchasing. Some clusters may enable farmers to respond quickly to changing market conditions, and may lead to increased innovation and competitiveness of individual farms.

Agricultural clusters also provide public benefits, such as increased employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, local agricultural infrastructure, and access to local foods.

We have conducted interviews and surveys with members of 8

participating clusters, including PA-WAgN, from across the Northeast. The results were presented to the PA-WAgN Steering Committee on October 30, 2008. Here we provide a brief summary of those results.

Group Dynamics: PA-WAgN members in the south-central region report very high cooperation (over 80% rating as high or very high) and very low competition (just over 30% rating as high or very high). Over 90% of members rated trust as high or very high; less than 5% rated conflict as high or very high.

Group Effectiveness: Nearly 90% rated PA-WAgN as moderately or very effective in achieving the

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PA-WAGN PARTICIPATES IN THE SMALL CLUSTERS PROJECT

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group's main goal. More than 90% believe PA-WAgN is moderately or very effective in making timely decisions, resolving conflicts, being open to new ideas, and responding to member needs. More than 80% believe PA-WAgN is moderately or very effective in communicating both internally and externally.

Leadership: PA-WAgN members in the south-central region felt that leadership within PA-WAgN is de-centralized—PA-WAgN's success does not depend on just one or two leaders. Relatedly, members also felt that PA-WAgN actively nurtures future leaders.

Benefits of PA-WAgN Membership: We asked about the benefits farmers expected to receive, as well as the benefits they felt they actually received. By comparing the expected and received benefits, cluster leaders and our research team can understand the areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among participating farmers—what were the expectations of participants when they joined the cluster, and do they feel these expectations have been met?

Selling products together. About two-thirds of participants in PA-WAgN expected to sell products together, but report not having that opportunity. However, more than 20% did not expect to sell products together, but report doing it.

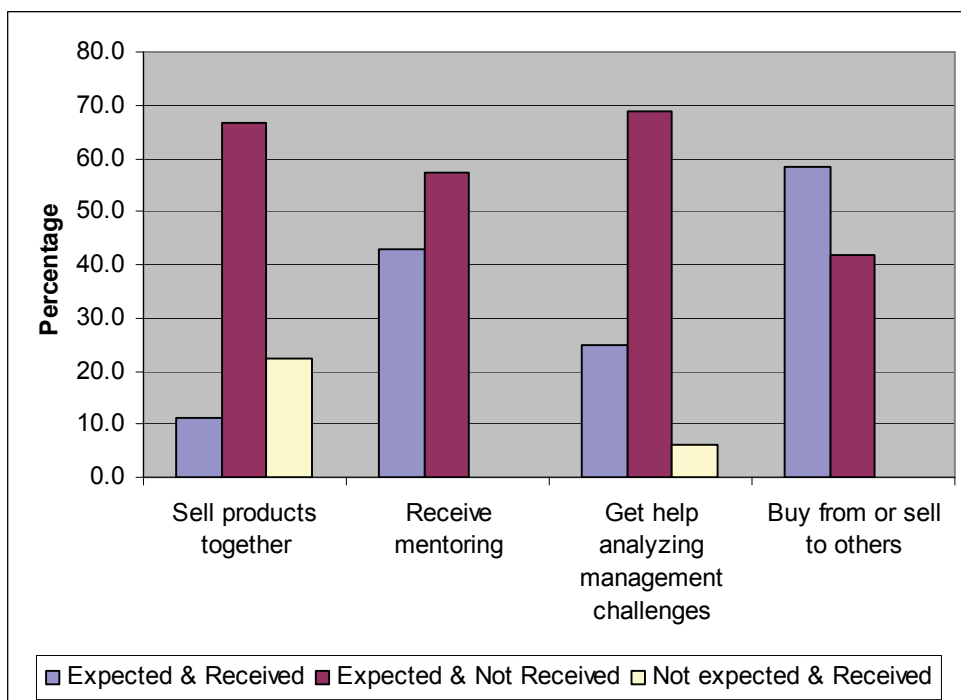
Receiving mentoring from other participants. Mentoring is a central goal of PA-WAgN, as it is for many clusters. Over one-half (58%) of PA-WAgN participants report expecting but not receiving mentoring.

Getting help with analyzing management challenges. Over 90% of PA-WAgN participants expected to receive help, but only about one-quarter report receiving help with management challenges.

Buying from or selling to other cluster participants. Nearly all participants (99%) expected to buy from or sell to other PA-WAgN members, but about 40% report not having this opportunity.

While this information is preliminary, it provides some ways to assess how PA-WAgN as meeting some of its goals. It also provides a way for PA-WAgN to see how it compares to other clusters in the Northeast, and creates an opportunity to learn from and teach these other groups. If you have any questions or suggestions about the SFC project, or would like a copy of the complete report, please contact Kathy Brasier.

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FIELD DAYS

MAKING YOUR OWN OPPORTUNITIES

As last autumn's deep blue skies and gold-tinged foliage invited us to wander down country roads on farm visits, we headed for innovative farms where we could learn from farmer-entrepreneurs and get our hands dirty acquiring new skills. Over the fall months, we explored cow and goat dairies, made cheese, constructed a high-tunnel, and pressed wine grapes. Again and again, we heard farmers say,



PA-WAGN/PASA Field Day at Paradise Gardens & Farm

don't be afraid to try something new. But these market-savvy farmers had sage advice too, for preventing costly mistakes and promoting success.

At Paradise Gardens and Farm in Jefferson County, Lucinda Hart-Gonzalez and Steve Cleghorn showed WAGN and Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) members around their newly constructed goat dairy and cheesemaking facility. We sat on hay bales in the shade to



Lucinda Hart-Gonzalez Making Goat Cheese

Then they explained the marketing plan they developed to allow them to feel secure starting the project. Finally we toured the immaculate new dairy and milking parlor where they produce pasteurized milk and cheese and sell to restaurants and at farmers' markets in the Pittsburgh area.

hear about the inspection and permitting process that was required before Steve and Lucinda could build their facility.

What advice did Steve and Lucinda have for prospective entrepreneurs? "Think about your strengths, your unique skills, and use them to develop your farm business," Lucinda said. "For example, Steve and I had almost no farming experience when we bought this farm. But we came from professional careers that taught us marketing and business management skills, so we built a direct-to-consumer farm business that takes advantage of what we know best. In the end, you make your own opportunities."

Another goat dairy, Wayside Acres in Perry County, hosted WAGN later in the fall. Farmer Kathy Soult owns a licensed goat dairy where she sells raw milk directly from her farm. Eventually she plans to make and sell cheeses and maybe ice cream.

Kathy advised participants to think realistically about the work load involved in any new venture. "If you're going to be an entrepreneur, plan on putting in long hours—much longer



Cathy Soult Milking Goats at Wayside Acres

than you'd put in working for an employer," she said. "You know, when I had an office job, I always had a chance to read the newspaper—but now I only use the paper to line

the bottom of my goat kids' pen! My day starts at 6:30 in the morning and doesn't end until 11:30 at night. But I love what I do, and wouldn't want it any other way."

Kathy also advised researching any project extensively beforehand and taking it slow: just one year working on a small scale will give you a foundation for success—or help you decide this project isn't for you.

Our third dairy field day took place in Southeastern Pennsylvania. At Birchrun Hills Farm in Chester Springs, Ken and Sue Miller use Holstein milk—an uncommon choice for cheesemakers—to make uncommon cheeses. Their artisan natural-rind cheeses are highly sought after by restaurants and farmers' market customers. We toured the Miller's historic farm and then traveled to the cheese-making facility they rent

FIELD DAYS: MAKING YOUR OWN OPPORTUNITIES

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a few miles away at Camphill Village in Kimberton. There we helped drain and pack cheese curds for their signature Birchrun Hills Blue into molds.

The Millers emphasized the importance of reassessing your enterprise over time to find the best fit for your entire operation. Sue explained how they first added Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) vegetable production to



Sue & Sebastian demonstrating cheesemaking

the farm to generate extra farm income, but gradually came to realize that value-added dairy was their best option.

"We were looking to add value to our milk. After running a CSA for four years, our loyal CSA members continually requested dairy products from our milk. The focus on our farm was the cows, so after four years of running the CSA in concert with our dairy farm, we chose to focus our efforts on adding value to our milk, and we began making cheese," Sue said. "We knew cheesemaking was a natural fit for our farm. Regionally the market was ready for specialty cheeses and we are trying to fill that niche."



Building a high tunnel at Jose Porter Farm

Rinehart of the National Center for Appropriate Technology, we drove the anchor pipes, fit the steel frame together, and

Another hands-on field day was hosted by Heidi Secord in Stroudsburg at the Josie Porter Farm. Heidi had a high tunnel to construct, and we put our shoulders to the task. Guided by Lee

bolted the purlins. After an afternoon of hard work, the steel skeleton was ready to be skinned with plastic.

Heidi showed us around the farm and explained how she obtained land and equipment and developed a 100-member CSA in just three years. "I think what is really necessary," Heidi

"What is really necessary is a vision of what you want to create and strategic goals."

—Heidi Secord

said, "is a vision of what you want to create, strategic goals if you will. Without that vision, I couldn't have developed a business plan. Experience is certainly important—I had farming and direct

marketing experience, having managed farms that sold produce at the Union Square Green-market in New York City. However, I had no CSA experience. I was always interested in the concept, though, because it offered a closer connection to the consumer than farmers' markets. I liked the idea because it gives a farm a greater impact on its community and it

allowed me a greater focus on education."



Janet Maki describing grape culture in Pennsylvania

For a less-strenuous but equally hands-on learning experience, we headed to J. Maki Winery at French Creek Vineyards in Elverson, PA.

We toured the

vineyard and tasted every wine grape with its corresponding wine. Winemaker and owner Janet Maki explained her planting, pruning, and low-chemical methods of production. Then, after the pickers brought flats of grapes from the field, we helped pour the grapes into the wine press and extrude the juice.

Janet's recipe for entrepreneurial success is simple—hard work and lots of practice. She developed her skills over two decades, first making wine as a hobby in her basement, and then working in her friends' vineyard in the Fingerlakes. Today she is one of very few female winemakers in the United States and her winery has won coveted awards. Less than a decade after

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CHERYL COOK NAMED DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT



Newly appointed USDA
Undersecretary for Rural
Development Cheryl Cook

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has named Cheryl Cook as Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development. USDA Rural Development is the lead federal entity for the nation's rural development needs. In 2008, the agency invested more than \$20 billion in rural America through its programs. In this position, Cook will manage policies and programs in Rural Development's three main areas: Business and Cooperatives, Housing and Community Facilities, and Utilities.

"Cheryl Cook brings with her a distinguished record of service as well as a keen understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities facing rural Americans today," Vilsack said. "I am confident that she will help USDA achieve President Obama's goals for rebuilding and revitalizing the nation's rural communities. Cheryl Cook is a highly experienced leader committed to expanding broadband networks, increasing investment in rural infrastructure and developing renewable energy."

Before joining USDA, Cook served as Deputy Secretary for Marketing and Economic Development at the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. Cook had previously worked for the Keystone Development Center, a non-profit organization in Pennsylvania that helps new and emerging cooperatives. She was also a member of the National Farmers Union's public policy staff. She is a PA-WAgN member and has served on the Steering Committee.



FIELD DAYS: MAKING YOUR OWN OPPORTUNITIES

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buying the Chester County property and planting vines, French Creek won the Vinalies Internationales gold medal for Blanc de Blanc champagne—the only U.S. winery to ever win that honor. In 2003, French Creek was awarded a silver medal for its Vidal Blanc ice wine.

As these success stories prove, opportunities abound. So look for those that allow you to fill a niche, take advantage of your own strengths, and go for what you love. But remember to do your research first, practice, and take it slow—as Kathy Soult would say, it's better to get your feet wet in a small puddle before jumping into the lake.

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Pressing Grapes at J. Maki Winery

GOING LOCAL

CONFESSIONS OF A LOCAL FOODS CITIZEN-EATER

So here I am in Georgia, a long way from Raymond Fisher's yogurt and Lyn Garling's chickens. The last time I wrote to y'all, I really didn't have a clue where I might land next. Eventually after much soul-searching, nail-biting, and down-to-the-wire-last-minute-panicking, I made a choice between Minnesota, Texas, Georgia and the Netherlands.

I finally settled on Georgia for lots of rather uninteresting reasons, and found myself in Athens (the Classic City) with all my worldly possessions in the brutal heat of August. (For a while I was thinking I was pretty much insane for NOT moving to Europe, but I think I had gotten in touch with my love for America, finally, and how). And then I started teaching geography at the University of Georgia two weeks later.

So, in the middle of all this madness and upheaval I've gotten a little bit (okay, a lot) off the eating-local wagon. Before I left Pennsylvania, I gave away all my frozen chickens and bacon and finished up all the canned and frozen goods. I arrived here with approximately one-half of one iota of local food, and being rather hungry, quickly got reacquainted with my local big chain grocery store. It was a dizzying and heady experience. Strawberries (laced with fungicides) all year round. Fiberboard tomatoes from who knows where. Cucumbers 10 for a \$1. Ready to eat cereal. Frozen pizza. Whipped cream in a can.

Seduced by all the products and their unbelievable availability, I had a major relapse. For the record, I did NOT buy whipped cream in a can, but I thought about it real hard one day and realized I had hit bottom. But, rather than go to the effort of finding my local farmers who don't have a Walmart with which to advertise themselves, I got back in the habit of cheap, unhealthy food arriving from some nameless place with all its associated residues of pollution and exploitation. (And guess what, I gained 10 pounds).

Fortunately, I had found the local public radio station (which is famously sponsored by the band Widespread Panic, for all you alt-rockers), and one day I heard about the Athens Farmer's

Market. It had just started this year, thanks to the efforts of Craig Page, the architect of PLACE—localplace.org—an organization dedicated to providing support for and information about local food. The pent up demand for local food was shocking to everyone. All the produce sold in a couple hours on the first day of the market.



Visiting the Athens, Georgia, Farmers Market
—Photograph by Amy Trauger

So, after hearing about the greatness of this market, I made a couple forays, but I quickly realized how I have been spoiled in Pennsylvania. Spoiled, spoiled, spoiled. By Amish farmers and high-quality, inexpensive dairy products. By five markets within 20 miles of State College. By dozens of organic CSAs. By high-quality, grass-fed meats in Lyn Garling's freezer. By free-range eggs around every corner in the valley. By Tuscarora Organic Growers. By Tait Farm. By every farmer I've ever called a friend.

I went to the only farmer's market in Athens and paid \$3 for one head of garlic, didn't

see one dairy product and got treated just like a stranger. Oy. It was a sad day. So, the next market day I went to Kroger for groceries and just plain missed Pennsylvania.

A few days later, I was complaining to a co-worker about my fallen and pathetic state, and she said, you know, you should really check out Athens' Locally Grown (athens.locallygrown.net), which is just about as close to a market heaven as any tech-savvy local eater could ever get. It's a cooperative of farmers who market their product online. You order on Monday and Tuesday (or 12:01 on Sunday night if you ever want to get some eggs) and pick up your order on Thursday in the old farmer's market building. They have a stack of orders about 3 inches deep, and last week the wait was over an hour long.

Now, if there are any young, new, or fed-up farmers out there, listen up. Land is cheap, the music scene in Athens is legendary, and there are lots and lots and lots of hungry local-vores. And, I want some yogurt and easy eggs, dang it. Oh, and

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

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let me put in a word for sun. Disturbingly, we are experiencing the mother of all droughts, but happily, the sun shines. A lot. The soil is pretty terrible, as I am finding out by laboring in my backyard mini-garden, but thankfully, my horse and all his friends produce enough soil amendments for me and any other enterprising young farmer who wants to discover the charms of the Deep (and Dirty) South. And let me also say ... Pecans. Figs. Peanuts. Sweet potatoes. Muscadines. Grits.

So, the longer I'm here, the better it gets and things are starting to click into place. I got a couple leads on some CSAs (which have waiting lists a mile long), found some restaurants featuring local foods, like Farm 255, which serves the most mouthwatering grits on the planet (www.farm255.com), got my hands on a 4# free-range chicken for the low price of \$15, and got some of the most outrageously tasty pecans from Covenant Grove, the farm where Curious George (the famous soil-amending horse) lives.

I hear tell that their blueberries and pears are also fair game for picking in the summer, and I am fixing to get me a bucket.

So, if I've ever re-learned anything in these last few months, the last thing I need to be doing is staying at home with my

head under the covers wishing for the good old days in Pennsylvania and taking my sorry self to Kroger instead of making friends. The essence of local eating is connection, relation, and commitment, and its opposite is cheap, easy, and terrible.

It can be hard and painful to forge new connections, especially when the taste of the good food I ate in Pennsylvania is still in my mouth, and the warmth of the farewell hugs still lingers in my memory. But change is good, and ultimately, we adapt or die in slow and small ways. So, I am eating more grits and less yogurt for breakfast. More beans and pecans and less chicken for dinner. And, let me say, it's not all bad. I just miss you all so much. Eat well, love well, change well.

Amy Trauger
Assistant Professor
The University of Georgia



For more musings on eating local, visit
Amy Trauger's blog at :
<http://localchow.blogspot.com>

A NEW RESOURCE

VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

Cornell University launched an innovative, online video series that will help agricultural entrepreneurs successfully launch new farms. The video series, titled, "Voices of Experience," covers essential topics such as financing farm start-up, marketing, profitability, and goal setting, to name just a few. The "Voices of Experience" series features farmers who have successfully started their own farm business. Voices of Experience online videos are available at the Beginning Farmer Project Web site: <http://www.nybeginningfarmers.org>. For more information on a variety of small farm topics, visit the Cornell Small Farms website at: <http://www.smallfarms.cornell.edu>.

MEET YOUR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

BARBARA KLINE



If you're a woman farmer seeking a mentor, you'll find one of the best in Allegheny County: Barb Kline. Drive up to her farmhouse on a July evening and you'll probably find Barb in the field. She'll take a welcome break from her labor and invite you up to the porch for some iced tea. And as you look out over the railing, you'll be astonished to see the entire city of Pittsburgh at your feet. You see, Barb is a special kind of farmer, and her farm fields are high atop a hill overlooking the Allegheny River, surrounded by concrete and asphalt. Barb's part of the urban farming revolution and her goals are simple—to feed her city neighbors and educate them about how food is produced.

Barb and her partner Randa Shannon bought their 5-acre farm a decade ago. In fact, the property is probably the last surviving farm in the city of Pittsburgh. Although the Stanton Heights neighborhood grew up around the little farm in the 1940s and '50s, it never completely obliterated its still-fertile fields.

"When we first saw this place, Randa and I immediately wanted to save it," Barb said. "It was neglected and sad looking, yet coveted by a developer. But we could see its promise. We are both nurses and had been studying Healing Touch, an alternative healing modality that uses gentle touch to reduce pain, anxiety, and stress. Our immediate vision for this place was to create a healing place on the land."

And so they did. They hauled away trash, rebuilt the house,

and learned organic gardening from a young woman who rented an acre to grow vegetables. After their renter moved on, Barb took over the vegetable production and began growing for a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Over the past decade she and the interns she's mentored have also produced organic vegetables for restaurants, caterers, and farmers' markets (where she's famous for her heirloom tomatoes).

"This land is better than any gym, and it has become a healing place in so many ways," Barb says. "I work in the fresh air and sunlight and see nature unfold before my eyes every day. I'm observing the miracle of germination and growth and the beauty of the harvest, I'm having successes and failures. And most of all, I'm gaining great friends who work with me."

Barb decided early on that her healing place would have a focus on mentoring and education for children and adults who wanted to learn about farming. The farm would heal both minds and bodies as her students learned to relieve stress and anxiety through physical labor, improve their diets with healthy food, and increase their food security. She's taught classes from "Starting Your Seedlings" to "Food Preservation: Canning, Freezing, and Drying."

"The CSA also works to create community," Barb says. "We have a group of people with varying levels of knowledge who come each week for 5 hours, plus a few extra when needed, and work under my direction. We grow food for ourselves and enough extra to generate enough income to sustain the farm. My goal is not to make as much money as I am able, but to grow for myself and others and have enough time to live a sustainable lifestyle. That means enough time to preserve and delight in the harvest we create."

Barb believes the farm's role in the neighborhood is more important now than ever. "Creating community is the best way to answer the current economic crisis," Barb says. "While urban agriculture may not be able to provide food in large volume, it certainly helps people in the city access fresh food. By using sustainable practices to regenerate the land, and by growing biointensively and working in community, it's possible to produce quite a bit of food. It's healthy work for the growers, and it's healthy food for the eaters. The closer the food to the population, the fresher and more healthful the food and the lower the associated fuel costs."

Barb's other mentoring efforts has been with women farmers. "One of my greatest blessings has been working as a

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MEET YOUR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE: BARBARA KLINE

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regional representative for PA-WAgN," Barb says. "The support and guidance I've received from fellow women farmers has been invaluable. Their support has kept me going in hard times."

"I've also been blessed by encouraging other women in pursuit of their farming dreams," Barb said. "For example, I just ran into a young woman who I worked with at our WAgN local conference a few months ago. After the conference, I did her Certified Naturally Grown inspection and got to see how much she's accomplished since early spring. Ah, Youth! But her enthusiasm was contagious and I really felt grateful for the small part I've played in her farming experience."

While Barb's vision for the farm is constantly evolving, she always comes back to that first vision of a healing place, a place where community is created. To create community, she says, you have to find mentors and be a mentor. Get to know your neighbors, and be a good neighbor. That's wise advice for all of us.

Linda Stewart Moist
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Mildreds' Daughters Farm nestled in an Urban Neighborhood

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MILDREDS' DAUGHTERS, VISIT:

<http://www.buylocalpa.org/source/view/mildreds-daughters-urban-farm>
<http://www.localharvest.org/farms/M6753>
<http://agmap.psu.edu/Businesses/1620>

PATH TO ORGANIC PROGRAM

Applications must be postmarked to PDA by July 31, 2009

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is pleased to bring the Path to Organic Program to our farming community. Part of the \$500,000 appropriation will provide technical assistance to farmers in transition to organic agriculture and the rest of the funding will be provided to participating farmers.

The Path to Organic program has two main purposes: first, to provide an incentive for farmers to make the transition to certified organic production practices; and second, to evaluate organic production practices as tools in improving soil health, protecting water quality and sequestering atmospheric carbon on a pilot basis outside of the traditional research environment.

Assistance will be available to producers who are currently in the three-year transition process as well, as those who have not yet begun the process, which is required by the USDA National Organic Program. Participating farmers will be eligible to receive a maximum of \$7,500 in a single year not to exceed \$30,000 for a

single operation over the four-year program period. Producers will also be eligible for technical assistance to aid in their transition process.

Applications are available in alternative format upon request, however requests must be received no later than 5 business days before the application deadline.

APPLICATIONS & DETAILS

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Market Development
Center For Farm Transitions
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Phone: 1-877-475-2686, Fax: (717) 787-5643

<http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us/agriculture/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=152673>

PA-WAGN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

LOOK FOR PA-WAGN'S COMPLETE 2009 FIELD DAY AND WORKSHOP SCHEDULE ON THE WEB AT <http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Calendar.html>.

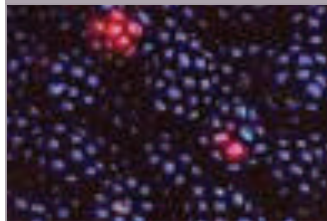


TRACTOR MAINTENANCE
JOSIE PORTER FARM
STROUDSBURG, PA
AUGUST 26, 2009
10:00 A.M.—2:30 P.M.

Registration fee: \$15
Includes Lunch

Register online at:
<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/2009-06Registration.cfm>

**MULTIPLE APPROACHES TO
COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE**
BLACKBERRY MEADOWS & MILDREDS' DAUGHTERS FARMS
PITTSBURGH, PA
SEPTEMBER 2, 2009
10:00 A.M.—4:00 P.M.



Registration fee: \$15
Includes Lunch

Register online at:
<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/2009-07Registration.cfm>

LIMITED TO 25 PARTICIPANTS—EARLY REGISTRATION ENCOURAGED



ENERGY-EFFICIENT VEGETABLE STORAGE IN SPRINGHOUSES
SINGING CREEK FARM (10:00 A.M.—NOON)
CLAN STEWART FARM (1:00—3:00 P.M.)
HUNTINGDON COUNTY
OCTOBER 6, 2009

Registration fee: FREE

Register online at: <http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/2009-08Registration.cfm>

**THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB:
INCREASING PROFITABILITY THROUGH TIME-SAVING TOOLS
AND TECHNIQUES ON THE SMALL FARM**



RED CAT FARM
GERMANVILLE, PA
OCTOBER 7, 2009
9:00 A.M.—4:00 P.M.
Featuring a presentation on tools designed for women by Green Heron Tools

Registration fee: \$15, Includes Lunch

Register online at:
<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/2009-09Registration.cfm>

**TRACTOR AND SMALL EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE
AND WINTERIZATION WORKSHOP**
FULTON FARM AT WILSON COLLEGE
OCTOBER 14, 2009
10:00 A.M.—3:00 P.M.
AUGUST 26, 2009



Registration fee: \$15
Includes Lunch

Register online at:
<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/2009-10Registration.cfm>

PA-WAGN REGIONAL POTLUCKS

EASTERN PA, NOVEMBER 7, NEAR STROUDSBURG (LOCATION TBA), 9:30 A.M.—3:00 P.M.

CENTRAL PA, NOVEMBER (DATE TBA)

SOUTHCENTRAL PA, NOVEMBER (DATE TBA)

VISIT PA-WAGN'S WEBSITE FOR FORTHCOMING DETAILS: <http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Calendar.html>

EVENTS OF INTEREST

Hands-On Biodiesel Production

Location: TBD

July 10, 10 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

\$50 PASA members, \$75 nonmembers

Lunch will be provided

Registration is limited to 25

Register online:

<https://www.pasafarming.net/educationaloutreach>

Controlling Cucurbit Pests on a Diversified Farm

Tewksbury Grace Farm, Muncy, Lycoming County

July 28, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Free, light refreshments will be provided.

Register online:

<https://www.pasafarming.net/educationaloutreach>

Sunflower Oil: Non-GMO Alternative Energy for Sustainable Farming

Silver Maple Farm, Kutztown, Berks County

July 31, 10 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

\$15 PASA Members, \$25 all others.

Lunch will be provided.

Register online:

<https://www.pasafarming.net/educationaloutreach>

2nd Annual Grass-fed, Grassfinished Beef Challenge Cookoff

Glasbern Inn, Fogelsville, Lehigh County

August 2, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

\$15 PASA members, \$25 all others

Register online:

<https://www.pasafarming.net/educationaloutreach>

Adding Value to Dairy: Ideas for Expanding Your Markets

Milky Way Farm, Troy, Bradford County

August 12, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

\$15 PASA members, \$25 all others.

Lunch will be provided.

Register online:

<https://www.pasafarming.net/educationaloutreach>

Advanced Cheesemaking with Peter Dixon

Hidden Hills Jerseys, Everett, Bedford County

August 18-20, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. each day

\$300 PASA members, \$375 all others.

Lunch and handouts will be provided.

Registration is limited to 20.

Register online:

<https://www.pasafarming.net/educationaloutreach>

Roll Down Cover Crop Mulches

August 20, 2009

Stouts Valley Farm; Easton, PA

For more information, contact S. Tianna DuPont, Sustainable Agriculture Educator

Penn State Cooperative Extension, Nazareth, PA 18064

610-746-1970, tdupont@psu.edu

Pasture Poultry Walk

A-Z Woodsong Hollow Farm, Boyertown, PA

August 26, 5:30 pm

Cost: No Charge

For more information, contact S. Tianna DuPont, Sustainable Agriculture Educator, Penn State Cooperative Extension, 610-746-1970, tdupont@psu.edu

Western Pennsylvania Vegetable & Berry Seminar

Butler, PA

November (date & time TBA)

For more information contact:

Eric Oesterling at 724-837-1402

PA-WAGN IN YOUR REGION

PA-WAGN's regions have been adjusted to reflect the newly reformed Penn State Cooperative Extension regions.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

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COUNTY/REGION GUIDE

WESTERN

ALLEGHENY
ARMSTRONG
BEAVER
BUTLER
CLARION
CRAWFORD
ERIE
FAYETTE
FOREST
GREENE
INDIANA
LAWRENCE
MERCER
VENANGO
WARREN
WESTMORELAND

CENTRAL

BEDFORD
BLAIR
CAMBRIA
CAMERON
CENTRE
CLEARFIELD
CLINTON
ELK
FULTON
HUNTINGDON
JEFFERSON
JUNIATA
MCKEAN
MIFFLIN
POTTER
SOMERSET

NORTH EASTERN

BRADFORD
CARBON
COLUMBIA
LACKAWANNA
LUZERNE
LYCOMING
MONROE
MONTOUR
NORTHUMBERLAND
PIKE
SCHUYLKILL
SNYDER
SULLIVAN
SUSQUEHANNA
TIOGA
UNION
WAYNE
WYOMING

SOUTH EASTERN

ADAMS
BERKS
BUCKS
CHESTER
CUMBERLAND
DAUPHIN
DELAWARE
FRANKLIN
LANCASTER
LEBANON
LEHIGH
MONTGOMERY
NORTHAMPTON
PHILADELPHIA
PERRY
YORK

PA-WAGN WESTERN REGION CONFERENCE

CELEBRATING SPRING!!!

A very cold and dreary day didn't prevent more than 40 PA-WAGN members from Celebrating Spring at the March 7 Western Region Potluck & Networking Conference in Mercer County.

Over several months prior to the event, PA-WAGN regional representatives Lynne Gelston, Barb Kline, and Maggie Robertson hosted several potluck gatherings to determine the interests and educational needs of members in their regions and used that input to develop a full one-day conference. The conference's goal was to enhance the network of women farmers in the regions.

Speakers were Barb Kline, Mildreds' Daughters Farm; Megan Vole, Peapod Organizing; Tanya Turner, Keystone Development Center (KDC); and a panel of PA-WAGN Regional Representatives.

Barb Kline, owner and operator of Mildreds' Daughters (a working member Community Supported Agriculture program in Allegheny County), shared her passion for heirloom tomatoes and seed saving with conference participants. With *Heirloom Vegetables: Old Fashioned and Back in Style*, Barb sparked significant interest in preserving heirloom vegetables.

Megan Voll of Peapod Organizing helped participants tackle the all-important task of organizing farm paperwork using inexpensive organizers and simple techniques to avoid an end-of-fiscal year crises. But, more importantly, Megan provided the motivation to tackle our clutter. She helped participants recognize that an organized office and accurate recordkeeping saves time so that farmers can focus on the big picture—FARMING! The first step is to define business goals and plans which will keep you focused and accountable, will keep employees motivated, and will help you establish daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly agendas.

Megan identified the following electronic receipt options to keep clutter off our desks but well organized and easily

accessible: <http://www.shoeboxed.com> and <http://www.neatco.com/paperfree>. Megan offers personal and business organizational services. For additional details, visit <http://www.peapodorganizing.com>.

Tonya Turner, Keystone Development Center (KDC), presented *Marketing Your Products*—an in depth look at the benefits of cooperative marketing.

KDC is committed to providing technical and research assistance to groups wishing to organize cooperatives to meet the economic and business development needs of rural and non-rural areas in and near Pennsylvania. For more details about the services provided by KDC, visit them on the web at <http://www.kdc.coop/welcome>.

A highlight of the conference was a panel discussion with PA-WAGN regional representatives addressing strategies to survive tough economic times. Facilitators and conference participants shared their successes and challenges, including an overwhelming concern for health insurance.

The most significant benefit to conference participants seemed to be the networking opportunities scheduled throughout the event. Many relationships were forged that will bring farmers together in their efforts to make their farm enterprises profitable and sustainable.

Special thanks to Lynne, Barb, and Maggie for their efforts in organization a successful event and for inspiring similar events throughout the state. Look for a potluck gathering near you in the near future.

Ann Stone
PA-WAGN
ams39@psu.edu



LOOK FOR A PA-WAGN REGIONAL CONFERENCE NEAR YOU

EASTERN PA, NOVEMBER 7 NEAR STROUDSBURG

CENTRAL PA, NOVEMBER DTBD

SOUTHCENTRAL PA, NOVEMBER DTBD

LOW-INCOME PENNSYLVANIANS ARE ENCOURAGED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CHIP (PA's Children's Health Insurance Program) AND ADULT BASIC PROGRAMS!
FOR INFORMATION AND APPLICATIONS VISIT: <http://www.ins.state.pa.us>.

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 or 814-863-4489 to request a paper copy.

THE CHANGING FACE OF FARMING

THE LATEST STATISTICS

The face of farming in American agriculture has changed, most notably through the steady increase of women farm operators.

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, women were 30% of all farm operators. In 2007, there were 306,209 female principal operators (14% of all operations) in the US as compared to 237,819 in 2002. This constitutes an increase of almost 30 percent in five years (USDA, <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>). In 2007, women increased to nearly 14% of all principal operators in Pennsylvania. In total, there were 26,405 women farm operators in Pennsylvania, accounting for 29% of all farm operators in the commonwealth.

PA-WAGN's recent research on PA-WAGN farmer members has shown that:

- 47% have farmed one to 6 years and 40% have farmed 10 or more years.
- 59% of the women produce fruit and vegetable crops; 58% produce livestock; 19% produce dairy products; and 4% produce row crops.
- 65% market their products directly to consumers

through on-farm markets, farmers markets, or other direct marketing outlets; and 20% distribute farm produce through Community Supported Agriculture operations.

- The skills that they most want to develop include: marketing products (79%), increasing production and soil fertility (70%).
- Two-thirds to one-half want to attend educational events to develop seven other skills: equipment maintenance, working with local government, equipment operation, building infrastructure, pest management, maintaining environmental health, and managing finances.
- They prefer hands-on and participatory workshops and seminars.
- About half (46%) of the women farmers express a desire to attend educational events specifically designed for women farmers that include time for networking, presentations or teaching by other women farmers, and an interactive format.

Mary Barbercheck, Kathy Brasier,
Nancy Ellen Kiernan, and Carolyn Sachs
PA-WAGN Working Group



THE KITCHEN GARDEN

DINNER TIME

While I thoroughly enjoy snowy weather and those cold cozy evenings spent reading gardening books, perusing seed catalogs, and dreaming about the garden-to-be, family dinners just seem a bit lackluster when pulling a meal together from frozen or canned produce. Then, after much anticipation, Spring arrives bringing with it rain, sunshine, and gardens brimming with organic produce.

Last evening, I was reminded of the most important reason for home gardening -- fresh from the garden dinners. Produce purchased from a local farmers' market may be a close contender but it just doesn't bring the same satisfaction as that which I've nurtured from seed to maturity and prepared moments after harvest.

It seems that any meal is transformed effortlessly into a culinary triumph when the freshest of ingredients are harvested from my own backyard. Perhaps it's knowing that my growing methods will sustain the soil. Perhaps it's knowing that my chemical-free produce is the healthiest choice for my family. Perhaps it's simply pride. It's the self-satisfaction that is obtained through hard (yet enjoyable) work with an abundance of rewards ripening daily in my little plot of peace.

Last evening, dinner consisted of pasta tossed with sautéed garlic, onions, baby zucchini, baby yellow squash, and diced canned tomatoes



topped with a healthy handful of chopped fresh basil, toasted pine nuts, and a good-quality Romano cheese. A salad of fresh mesclun, sugar-snap peas, wild black raspberries, minced tarragon, minced chives, and toasted pecans tossed with a honey Dijon vinaigrette (recipe follows) completed the meal. Preparation, including harvest time, took approximately 45 minutes. The meal disappeared within minutes but my pride lives on. Dinner time is my inspiration for gardening!

If you feel that gardening is not an option for you, due to time or space constraints, I wholeheartedly encourage you to just grow something. Even a small window-sill herb garden can be a rewarding experience as it has the power to transform an uninspired meal into something a bit more spectacular.

Ann Stone
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DID YOU KNOW.....

Wild black raspberries, native to Pennsylvania, are known to have one of the highest amounts of antioxidants of both fruits & vegetables. Wild black raspberries have a very high content of anthocyanins which are linked to improving vision, controlling diabetes, improving circulation, preventing cancer, and retarding the effects of aging, particularly loss of memory and motor skills.

HONEY-DIJON VINAIGRETTE

3 TABLESPOONS RASPBERRY WINE VINEGAR
3 TABLESPOONS HONEY (PREFERABLY LOCAL)
3 TABLESPOONS GOOD QUALITY DIJON MUSTARD
¼ CUP WALNUT OIL
SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND WHITE PEPPER TO TASTE

PLACE ALL INGREDIENTS IN A MASON JAR. SECURE LID AND SHAKE VIGOROUSLY UNTIL EMULSIFIED.

THIS VERY BASIC VINAIGRETTE MAY BE ADJUSTED TO SUITE ANY TYPE OF SALAD. FOR EXAMPLE, TO DRESS A SALAD WITH AN ASIAN FLAIR, REPLACE THE RASPBERRY WINE VINEGAR WITH RICE WINE VINEGAR, ADD A TABLESPOON OF TOASTED SESAME OIL AND MINCED GINGER AND GARLIC.

