

UPCOMING EVENTS

FARMING FOR THE FUTURE: PARTNERS IN STEWARDSHIP

promises to be an exciting conference on the future of farming. Sessions will focus on how communities can work together to maintain a viable, sustainable food and agriculture system. The conference will be held in Syracuse, NY, on February 22-23, 1995.

The conference is intended to bring together diverse groups including farmers, prospective farmers, planning board members, planners, conservation advisory council members, Extension agents, researchers, agricultural educators, environmentalists, consumer advocates, agribusiness professionals, agency and organization members and professionals, farm managers, local and regional policy makers, and others interested in the future of farming.

One emphasis of the conference will be program development and planning. Educators and people working to support agriculture will learn how to work with diverse audiences and share perspectives. Conference sessions will provide opportunities for farmers to share their experiences, practices, techniques and technology with others. Both Pesticide Recertification credits and Certified Crop Advisor credits will be given for selected workshops.

Growing out of the "Transitions" conference, Farming for the Future: Partners in Stewardship is a conference on farming practices, land stewardship, nutrient and pest management, building local networks for a sustainable food and agriculture system, water quality preservation, whole farm planning, and other topics related to sustaining farming and communities. This conference will provide an excellent arena for diverse perspectives to come together on a multitude of agricultural issues.

Sponsors include: Cornell Cooperative Extension, American Agriculturist magazine, Cornell University Farming

Continued on page 9

ifo NEWS continued

Continued from page 6

Other trials

Although standard management practices can be used to manage soil organic matter, decomposition and soil biological activity that benefit crop production, many companies offer products for sale to manage these things. This year David Meyer of Putnam Co. set up a field trial to evaluate the effectiveness of one of these products in conventionally tilled soybeans.

Results of these trials will be presented at the IFO Annual Meeting and in the IFO 1994 On-farm Research Trials Summary. These trials were supported in part by grants from the George Gund Foundation and the Paul C. and Edna H. Warner Endowment. With collaborating researchers from the Ohio State University, Innovative Farmers of Ohio was also awarded a 2 year grant from the U.S.D.A. Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program to continue testing these and other possible N management tools.

IFO to Evaluate Whole Farm Planning Tools

Agriculture has been identified as a major contributor to non point-source pollution into the Great Lakes. To address this problem, federal, state, and local authorities have adopted an array of erosion, nutrient and pesticide control measures designed to minimize the environmental impact of agriculture on the water quality of the Great Lakes. At the farm level, where these various programs are ultimately planned and implemented, farmers are often caught between inconsistencies among the programs and agencies as well as their own personal goals and economic needs. This piecemeal approach to environmental protection often promotes single technical solutions for each problem encountered, which may be incompatible with other regulatory programs or farmer goals.

Whole farm planning may provide a more efficient and farmer driven process to the isolated planning processes currently being required by various federal and state agencies. A good whole farm plan would be a document useful to farmers, who know their own resources better than anyone off the farm, and have enough detail to satisfy environmental quality goals mandated at the federal, state or local level. Most importantly, these plans would be based on the farm family goals and the objectives of wise stewardship and improvement of environmental quality. Some farmers are using various computer or management tools to assist in whole farm planning, but the groundwork needs to be laid to test systems that work and make these widely available.

In order to evaluate the tools currently available for whole farm planning, IFO, along with the Minnesota Project, The Land Stewardship Project and Sustainable Farming Association, Michigan Agriculture Stewardship Association, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, Wisconsin Rural Development Center/ Michael Fields Agriculture Institute, and the New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group have formed the Great Lakes Basin Comprehensive Farm Planning Network. This network has just been awarded a two year grant from the Great Lakes Protection Fund for its efforts. The overall goal is to demonstrate that farmers and the farm community can take the lead in creating and implementing a farm planning process to reduce agricultural impacts on the environment without the need for more enforced regulations.

If you are interested in participating in this evaluation process or would like additional information on the network, contact the IFO project representative-Anu Rangarajan, at 216-263-3725 or 216-262-2987.

Continued on Page 10

U.S. Pesticide Use Soars

From the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

U.S. pesticide use reached an all-time high of more than 1.2 billion pounds in 1995, over twice as much as was used 30 years ago (540 million pounds in 1964).

According to NRDC (National Resources Defense Council), these all-time highs in pesticide use have occurred despite the assertion by the pesticide industry that it has adopted "stewardship" and "integrated pest management" programs that result in smarter and lower pesticide use.

The EPA draft document includes 1994 and 1995 figures for 30 chemicals. 1.23 billion pounds of pesticides were applied in 1994, representing a jump of more than 100 million pounds from the previous year. In 1995, 1.25 billion pounds were applied.

EPA figures include only active ingredients, and not the so-called "inert" ingredients such as petroleum, benzene and other toxic compounds. These "inert" chemicals can comprise over 50% of the volume of formulated pesticides. EPA figures exclude non-conventional pesticide uses, such as wood preservatives and disinfectants, which the EPA has previously estimated at more than one billion pounds per year. Taking these additional uses into consideration, the total U.S. pesticide use in 1994-1995 is estimated at more than 2.2 to 2.3 billion pounds per year.

In 1995, use of pesticides was at an all-time high in agricultural, industrial, commercial and government applications. Expenditures on pesticides also hit a new high of \$10.4 billion in 1995. More herbicides were used than during any previous two-year period; more insecticides were used than any previous year since 1981-82; and fungicide use was the highest yet recorded and was over double the amount used in 1979.

Pesticides whose use in the U.S. increased considerably, according to the draft EPA document, included methyl bromide, metam sodium, dichloropropene, acetochlor, sulfur and petroleum oils. Those pesticides

Continued on page 12

PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE SAYS... U.S. AG MUST BE SUSTAINABLE

"U.S. agriculture must be sustainable if the national goal of sustainable development is to be achieved," and should be supported with research that integrates "agricultural productivity and profitability with environmental stewardship," according to the report of the Sustainable Agriculture Task Force of the President's Council on Sustainable Development. Chartered by the President's Council in 1994, the Task Force was charged with "articulating the key social, economic, and

environmental challenges to be met in achieving a sustainable U.S. agriculture." In its report, the Task Force defines four goals for sustainable agriculture, and nine recommendations on how to achieve those goals.

For a copy of the Sustainable Agriculture Task Force Report, contact Adelia Bakiel at the USDA, 202-720-2456.

Source: "Alternative Agriculture News," May 1996, Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture.

...IFO'S NEW PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Planning training grant; and the upcoming tour to the Michigan Kellogg Biological Station and Rich Bennett's cover crop research plots in Napoleon, Ohio scheduled for October 9-11. Ohio's team also presented workshops by Mark Bennett and Mike Hogan on "Developing a Statewide Sustainable Agriculture Team" and by Michael Coté on "Using Study Circles for Sustainable Agriculture Training". These and other workshop presentations are included in an extensive handbook collection of training materials for sustainable agriculture and leadership development. Copies of presentations and other training materials from all of the above workshops are available upon request from IFO.

Given all these training efforts the reader might be wondering: Where are these training efforts heading? What's beyond the training of the trainers? How will all the farmers who were unable to participate in training be reached? Who are the new groups the team should reach out to? Will the Ohio Sustainable Agriculture Team create a lasting partnership between

OSU, IFO, OEFFA, NRCS and others working for sustainable agriculture, and will it lead to the development of a genuine shared vision and strategic plan for sustaining Ohio's agriculture?

Whatever your thoughts or questions are regarding these efforts please share them with IFO members. IFO needs your ideas and involvement if it's going to be an effective partner in building an Ohio Sustainable Agriculture. There will be challenges in sustaining effective team efforts in sustainable agricultural research and education programs when project funds become scarce, and a partnership among organizations that share resources stands a far better chance of sustaining program and training efforts. While building a partnership with others in sustainable agriculture presents IFO with new challenges it also affords us a greater opportunity to share leadership and responsibility in showing how Ohio agriculture can be more profitable, environmentally sound, and supportive of rural communities and farm families.

by Michael Coté, Ag Education, OSU.

...THE GREAT LAKES BASIN "COMPREHENSIVE FARM PLANNING NETWORK"

economic profitability of the whole farm. This protects the land, water and wildlife resources for ourselves, our children, and the surrounding communities. This type of proactive, voluntary farmer effort would also improve the non-farming public's perception of agriculture. In addition, implementation of CFP and action plans may demonstrate to government and environmental regulators that:

- given information and support, farmers can maximize both profit and wise stewardship on their own, without more regulations
- one comprehensive farm plan may suffice for compliance to the current environmental protection measures
- a CFP may be used to qualify farmers for future natural resource based programs
- some future regulatory legislation may not be necessary with farmer voluntary action to protect the environment

OHIO-IFO Activities as part of the Network

Currently we are developing a working group to oversee the Ohio activities under this grant. This working group will be comprised of individuals from extension, NRCS, The Nature Conservancy, and OEFFA, as well as IFO farmers. Our objectives will be to gather information on the various CFP tools currently available, develop criteria for evaluating these tools, get training in these different tools, and then try these out on farms in the Lake Erie Basin. As described earlier,

there are a few tools out there that are being promoted as CFP tools (Planator, Ontario Environmental Farm Plan, Holistic Resource Management, Farm a Syst). Each of these may have different strengths and weaknesses, and our job is to try and evaluate how easy they are to use, what kinds of information a farmer gains from them, and how the information helps generate a viable action plan. We may create a sort of directory of CFP tools which a farmer can use to choose one for their own farm, based on their resources (i.e. computer) or the complexity of their operation.

An example of a farmer trial might involve attending a training on the CFP tool, then going through the whole farm assessment and planning process. In the end, an action plan will be developed with any needed help from other farmers, agency individuals or researchers. From this effort, we hopefully will be able to demonstrate that this is a process by which many diverse farmers can voluntarily take stock of their own operations and make changes that minimize the impact of their farm on the environment.

Future IFO newsletters will provide more detail on specific comprehensive farm planning tools that are available or being used, like the Ontario Environmental Farm Plan, as well as updates on Ohio activities. If you would like more information on the project, are interested in being part of the working group, or may like try out one of these CFP tools on you own farm, please contact Anu Rangarajan at (216)263-3645.

RESOURCES - ATTRA Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas- and its' newsletter - ATTRA news

A key source of information for rural people, "dedicated to helping communities and individuals find sustainable ways of improving the quality of life, using skills and resources at hand". If you need answers to almost any question, they will provide them. Frame your question succinctly-"What's currently available in small scale implements for draft animals?"- and in 2 or 3 weeks you'll receive a package of data, info and sources that will fill in all the blanks. You can reach them toll free at 1-800-346-9140 or by mail at Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas, P.O. Box 3657 Fayetteville, Arkansas 72702

2nd Edition SAN Directory ON SALE NOW!

The newly released 2nd Edition, Sustainable Agriculture Directory of Expertise is now on sale.

This electronic version of the popular directory contains a total of 932 individuals and organizations willing to share sustainable agriculture know-how and skills with others. It's available on a 3.5-inch computer diskette (compatible with MS DOS systems) which allows users to browse through the directory like an electronic book, jump from section to section via hypertext links, or search for keywords anywhere within a document. Users can print out desired information or save it to a file.

To order, please send \$14.95 to Sustainable Agriculture Publications, Hills Building, Room 12, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405. Make check or money order payable to "Sustainable Agriculture Publications."

Purchase orders can be mailed to the above address or faxed to 802-656-4656. Special bulk order discounts are available. Questions about directory orders should be directed to Meredith Simpson at the above address or by phone at 802-656-0471.

Ayers reviews ALBC pub

ATTRA Technical Specialist Anne Ayers, who serves as a board member of the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC), is reviewing the manuscript of a new ALBC handbook. With a working title of "The Conservation Breeders Handbook," the book explains primary concepts of animal breeding, breeding methods (such as inbreeding and linebreeding), and the importance of a guiding philosophy.

For more information, please contact: ALBC, Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312, (919) 542-5704.