

# NOFA

New Hampshire



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NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER OF THE NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION

## The Voice of Organic Agriculture in New Hampshire

### Something for Everyone at the NOFA Summer Conference

Farmers, gardeners, activists and consumers of organic products will all find something new at the 1995 NOFA Summer Conference to be held this August 11-13 at Hampshire College in Amherst, MA. Over 140 workshops will cover a wide range of topics ranging from livestock handling to soap making, from Cuban organic agriculture to nutrition. A keynote address from Lynn Miller, Oregon horse farmer and publisher of The Small Farmer's Journal, promises to be inspiring and informative. Lots of teen and children's workshops are planned as well.

#### ORGANIC FARMING



#### Rooted in the dirt.

The Saturday afternoon country fair is fun for young and old with a variety of games, contests, exhibitions, a parade, farmers' market

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## CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES, CHANGING VALUES

On March 29th and 30th, a New England conference on Sustainable Agriculture was held for Cooperative Extension and USDA Agency personnel and growers. Approximately 250 participants gathered to look intensively at what sustainability means to our region, and how each of us can define it for ourselves in a functional way so as to begin to effect changes in our daily planning and practices.

The first keynote speaker was Fred Kirschenmann, a biodynamic grain and livestock farmer from south central North Dakota. He laid the groundwork for the group presenting two paradigms of agriculture — the industrial and the ecological. In the industrial model the grower produces a commodity as cheaply as possible, controlling nature and maximizing efficiency by means of specialization, uniformity and economies of scale. The market focus is global and the accounting focus is short term costs. In the ecological model, the grower produces nourishment, while balancing economic viability, envi-

ronmental protection and social responsibility. The market focus is regional and the accounting focus is broad, long-range cost.

The second keynote speaker was Greg Watson, who has integrated agriculture and the environment at the New Alchemy Institute, the Mass. Department of Food and Agriculture, and the Nature Conservancy. Addressing the topic of endangered species, Greg detailed the recent redirection of focus of the Nature Conservancy. The prevailing thinking in the past was to preserve sanctuaries by buying parcels of land; now that is seen as too limiting, so the focus has changed to protecting rural areas through the promotion of sustainable agriculture. Thus the principle responsibility for preserving wildlife in America falls to the farmers and their advisors.

Ten workshops were offered, to break up the immense topic into manageable parts: Improved Decision-Making through Whole Farm Analysis; Techniques for Evaluating Alternative Products and En-

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## HOLDING THE QUALITY OF YOUR MARKET

Being able to grow quality organic produce requires a lot of skill and patience. Don't throw all that effort away in the time between harvest and sale in the market! Be as sharp in handling crops to be shipped as you were in producing them.

New Hampshire summers can be hot and sticky, and fruits and veggies can be just as affected by sun and heat as you. Here are some steps to take to preserve nutrients, flavor and overall quality.

1. Pick only in the coolest part of the day, early morning preferred (plants lost previ-

ous day's heat overnight).

2. Cool produce to remove field heat ASAP after picking; enzymes and bacteria in the fruit or greens begin spoilage if not cooled. Hydro-cooling with cold well water in an old bathtub works well, or buy a \$30,000 commercial hydro-cooler like those used on the West Coast. A soak in an ole tub for 15-20 minutes does the same thing. Keep in the shade, under wet burlap, in a cooler or cellar, until leaving the farm.

3. Wash your goods! Remove spines from cucumbers and squash, to slow dehydra-

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