

# Area farmers get SARE grants

## Projects vary from straw to moths

By **CHRIS MARQUART**  
Times Staff Writer

Three local farmers were recently awarded more than \$16,000 in grant money for their work with Community Supported Agriculture, straw in soil and deterring moths.

Elizabeth Henderson of Newark, William Dalrymple of Ovid, and Betsey Hansen of Penn Yan received the awards from the Northeastern Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program.

Henderson received \$3,982 to help expand a Community Supported Agriculture partnership in the Rochester area. Henderson's Peace Work Organic Farm, part of an existing CSA, has been supplying the Genesee Valley Organization with food and employment for 13 years. The farm has 200 shareholders across Ontario, Wayne and Monroe counties; they also help with distribution during the harvest, taking the produce to the Abundance Cooperative Market in Rochester.

The grant money will be used to train the staff at the Northeast Neighborhood Association's Abundance Food Market in Rochester, improve the land around it, and prepare an additional three acres for farming. Money also will be allotted to construct a walk-in cooler.

"They've never grown on as big a scale," said Henderson, who will help train members of Abundance Market.

Community Supported Agriculture programs are contracts between local families and farmers. The farmers are given working capital at the beginning of the year to help with necessities until the harvest comes in.

The families involved work three four-hour shifts on the farm during the growing season and receive some of the produce at harvest time.

Families typically pay \$12



Kathleen Lange / Finger Lakes Times

**William Dalrymple of Ovid shows where two augurs will be placed on the machine he is making with some of the grant money he recently received.**

to \$18 for the vegetables they receive each week, and "some pay as little as \$3 in food stamps," Henderson said.

"We hope to have 1 percent of the people in Rochester [belonging to the] CSA within five

years," she said.

Rochester's population is about 1.08 million, according to the Census Bureau, so 1 percent would be 10,800 CSA members.

"[The program] will make

the connection between local people and the local farmers that can supply them with fresh, craft-grown food, not mass-produced foods," she

■ See GRANTS on Page 3B



# GRANTS

■ Continued from Page 1B

added.

"Magin Farms in Penfield will start a CSA next year. Greens and mixed salad greens (served) in Rochester restaurants and grocery stores are from this farm," Henderson said.

■ ■ ■

In southern Seneca County, Dalrymple, of Dalrymple Farms, received \$9,555 to research the use of straw in maintaining soil.

His plan is to use compost under the trellises where grapes grow. The compost will then "break down and put nutrients into the soil faster ... and build organic matter in the soil," the grant proposal states.

The theory is that this blanket of chopped straw will limit erosion, improve soil life, and reduce weeds and the need for chemicals controls. The organic compounds will work into the soil over the years and eventually produce stronger grapevines and a heartier crop.

"As organic matter is increased, the soil will retain mois-

ture and by all rights, achieve larger, more stable crops ... and balance the plants so they stay more uniform," Dalrymple said.

With the grant, Dalrymple Farms' vineyard in Ovid will employ, in conjunction with Cooperative Extension, soil and plant analysts to see if there is an advantage to using straw. Studies have shown that it can be effective, so hopes are high.

"We have done this on an experimental basis on test rows and small plots but never for produce. Two plots, 10 acres each, will be divided up into sections. One row of just compost, then next will have both straw and compost, the third will be just straw, and some will be left alone."

The staggered treatment will help show the advantages and disadvantages of each treatment when compared to the control vines.

The grant also will help fund a machine Dalrymple is building — a hybrid of a German-engineered straw chopper, a roadside mulcher and the Mill Creek Chucking Wagon he already uses to spread compost beneath the trellises.

This new machine will lay 4- to 6-inch pieces of straw on the rows, feeding off of a round bale that is unwinding at the rear of the apparatus.

"Using chopped straw has really helped. With bale straw, you put it where it lands. Chopped straw will stay where we want it," he said.

Dalrymple's machine will be able to be turned off and on as needed, applying the mixture where it's most needed, to balance the soil. Better-balanced soil will make for a more uniform crop, increasing production and making the business more profitable, Dalrymple said. The process, if effective, can help cut costs to the farmers for weed-controlling chemicals, as well.

The results of Dalrymple's study will be published in newsletters by Tim Martinson, of Cooperative Extension. If progress is shown, a field meeting may be held in late summer, so farmers can see the progress.

■ ■ ■

Hansen received \$2,601 to help show the effectiveness of her method of deterring Dia-

mondback moths, which can substantially damage a cabbage crop.

Hansen learned that if collard greens are placed along the perimeter of a cabbage field, the moths will live in the greens and not harm the crop.

Hansen tried this last year on her own but could not afford the time to accurately complete the study. The funds will be used to hire a field scout to regularly monitor the moths, which are resistant to most chemical controls, and the greens. No additional details were available.

SARE distributed grants totaling \$191,068 to private, non-profit farms in 13 states, including New York.

Projects had to meet certain criteria to qualify for the funds, including reducing environmental health risks, reducing cost and increasing profits to farmers, conserving the soil and natural resources and enhancing rural employment.

SARE is a national program, and the funds are distributed regionally. Northeast SARE received 154 applications for its farming grants this year and funded roughly one-third of them