



Women, Food, and Agriculture Network

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Linking and empowering women to build food systems and communities that are healthy, just, sustainable, and that promote environmental integrity.

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Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act

On May 16, the **Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act**, a comprehensive set of policy options designed to meet the unique challenges and opportunities of today's beginning farmers and ranchers, was introduced in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. The House version of the Farm Bill included some of the provisions within this act and Senator Harkin will be including all of the provisions in his Chairman's mark.

The need for the 2007 farm bill to include such an initiative could not be clearer. Farmers over the age of 65

outnumber those under 35 by more than two to one. A majority of farmland and farm business assets is owned by



those over 65 as well. In 1978, 350,000 farmers aged 34 or younger claimed farming as their primary occupation. By the 2002 Census of Agriculture, just over 70,000

people aged 34 or younger made the same claim.

Since 1990, Congress has included provisions in the farm bill for beginning farmers and ranchers, especially in the area of farm credit. The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act would make improvements to credit programs and create new initiatives that go beyond traditional credit needs. These would give beginners additional tools to successfully enter farming or ranching, be good stewards of the land, be innovative and entrepreneurial, and respond to rapidly

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BOOK REVIEW: End Hunger!

A book length poem about the relationship between war and hunger written by MacCanon Brown

End Hunger! is an ambitious prose poem exploring the history of the twin evils: hunger and war. The reader is called to listen to the farmers, peasants and food gatherers who have gone before us and who "cannot rest." We are compelled to look at the array

of food packages in every American grocery store and see through them to the faces of individuals who have been broken by war, greed, hunger, homelessness. The poem is an indictment of both our national and our individual disregard for "the cry of hunger in America, never before so piercing a cry, so loud and long." Deborah Fink, past contributor to the WFAN newsletter says of

End Hunger!: "This is a very powerful poem. It makes a good connection between the military establishment and hunger."

For 18 years MacCanon Brown lived in the role of a traditional Iowa farm woman. Her poetry has appeared in numerous literary anthologies and magazines. In previous years, as a literary artist, she

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This newsletter is published by the Women, Food, and Agriculture Network, a Tides Center Project. We welcome suggestions, stories and news from your part of the world. Our emphasis is on women's lives, their relationships, communities, and families. We welcome first person articles, analyses, book or video reviews, original poetry and art, and letters to the editor.

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Joyce Lock Creates Successful Trivia Game

WFAN Board Member Joyce Lock has been on an adventure. Several years ago when she was a grad student in gastronomy at Boston University, Joyce developed a trivia board game as a class project. Now, just in time for the holidays *Foodie Fight, A Trivia Game for Serious Food Lovers*, will give board game players hours of fun.

According to Chronicle Books, the publisher, *Foodie Fight* is an “addictive trivia game that allows players to strut their culinary stuff and prove who is the smartest foodie of them all. With over 1,000 questions on topics ranging from culinary science and

celebrity chefs to food history and exotic cuisine, each player is bound to get a full serving of food knowledge.” Joyce loves the idea that *Foodie Fight* will challenge the experts and engage non-foodies with fun, useful, surprising, and thought-provoking content—not merely random trivia.



Her company, Stir, makes “ideas into food-stuff” including product development projects, culinary consulting services, cooking classes for sustainable cui-



sine, recipe development, and writing assignments and is a judge for the James Beard Foundation Awards. Joyce lives in Des Moines, Iowa.

As of this printing, game lovers can purchase *Foodie Fight* in Des Moines at Kitchen Collage, 430 E Locust St ; Letter Perfect, 2900 University Ave ; Games and More, 1551 E 35th St. It is anticipated that Gateway Market, 2002 Woodland Ave. will be carrying it. *Foodie Fight* can also be purchased online at amazon.com and chronicalbooks.com.

Save the Date!

"We Are the Ones We've Been Waiting For" is the theme for this year's Women's Fall Gathering, November 9th to the 11th. The planning committee has been making the final arrangements for a restful, meaningful weekend with learning experiences mingled throughout our time together.

The EWALU Stone Center <http://www.ewalu.org/stonectr.htm> near Strawberry Point, Iowa will welcome us on Friday evening November 9th. The cost will be \$99 - this will include two nights lodging and meals on Saturday morning and evening and Sunday morning. We are planning a potluck for Saturday noon, so please bring your best potluck dish along with the recipe for others to try.

Every year there is a silent auction to help defray costs of the weekend and to allow us to offer scholarships to participants. Please bring an item from your area that you are willing to donate to the silent auction.

Plan on arriving on Friday between 5 and 7 p.m. We will spend the evening getting to know each other and sharing what has happened over the past year. On Saturday, Laura Krouse, farmer from Mt. Vernon, Iowa will be our keynote speaker. There will also be virtual farm tours and several workshops to choose from. A highlight on Saturday will be having time set aside to explore the 250 acres of rolling hills and woodlands. On Saturday night there will be a soup supper with a film later in the evening.

We would like to extend a special invitation to mothers who would like to bring their daughters. We have done this in the past and have enjoyed having several generations present. Please contact Denise O'Brien at denise@wfan.org or 712-243-3264 for more information or to make your reservation. Watch for registration on our website www.wfan.org.

Opportunity Act - Continued from Page 1



changing demands of the marketplace.

Three exciting provisions in the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act include:

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, a competitive grants program supporting education, extension, and technical assistance directed at new farming opportunities.

This program supports collaborative local, state, and regionally-based networks and partnerships to supply financial and entrepreneurial training, mentoring and apprenticeship programs, "land link" programs, and education and outreach to assist beginning farmers and ranchers. It was first authorized

under the 2002 farm bill. The House version of the farm bill includes this program with \$15 million in mandatory funding.

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Account (IDA) uses financial training and matched savings accounts to assist those of modest means to establish a pattern of savings.

In the case of beginning farmers, the account proceeds may be used toward capital expenditures for a farm or ranch operation, including expenses associated with purchases of land, buildings, equipment or livestock, or toward acquisition of training. An IDA pilot program should be made available in at least 15 states. This was not included in the House version of the farm bill but will be in the Senate version.

Special Conservation Incentives would reauthorize and strengthen the existing stewardship authority (Sec. 2004(a) of the 2002 Farm Bill) to provide

special incentives to beginning and limited resource producers to encourage their participation in conservation, to help get new farmers started, and to achieve long lasting conservation improvements. It will now include specific authorizations for sustainable agriculture training, conservation planning assistance, bonus payments for whole farm total resource management, and special ranking points. The House version of the farm bill did not include this provision but will be included in the Senate version.

The future health and vitality of agriculture, family farmers and ranchers, and rural communities will depend on strong, comprehensive public policies that encourage a new generation to enter agriculture. With the 2007 farm bill, Congress has the opportunity to enact such far-seeing policies.

Contact: Traci Bruckner, 402.687.2103 x 1016 or tracib@cfra.org for details.

"In 1978, 350,000 farmers aged 34 or younger claimed farming as their primary occupation. By the 2002 Census of Agriculture, just over 70,000 people aged 34 or younger made the same claim."

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was a lecturer. Since 1992 she has served as a homeless advocate, social activist and community leader in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She is co-founder and Executive Director of the organization "Repairers of the Breach", an agency focused on developing people in poverty.

To order an autographed copy of End Hunger!, send a check or money order for \$24.95 to: MacCanon Brown Publications, P.O. Box 801, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201-0801. This printing is a limited edition of 400 volumes, individually hardbound, a beautiful fine publishing collector's edition. More information is available at <http://members.bucketworks.org/MacCanonBrown>.

Review by Carole Winkleblack
Library Director, Marshalltown, Iowa



Greening the Farm Bill



“We must act now for the future of family farmers, the environment, and our nation’s health.”



We are confronted today by food system crises that require foresight and interdisciplinary action at the local, state, and federal level. The loss of biodiversity and family farmers, big-box dominance of the food economy, and soaring rates of obesity clearly indicate that our farm policy is inadequate. The current Farm Bill expires at the end of the September, giving us the opportunity to articulate our vision of agriculture and to create and reform the public policies needed to advance it. We can’t wait for the next farm bill cycle to come along to take on the challenge of making change. We must act now for the future of family farmers, the environment, and our nation’s health.

The organization I work for, the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (SAC), has been actively fighting for a wide set of policies in the next Farm Bill that can increase farm profitability and improve the health of individuals, communities, and the environment. Among other policies, SAC is advocating for

increased support for programs that encourage regional processing and distribution, technical assistance and outreach to beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and funding for interdisciplinary, outcome-based research that fosters sustainable food systems. Given the negative environmental and health impacts of intensive row cropping and large-scale, confined livestock production, (agro-industrial practices that are encouraged by current commodity payment programs), SAC is working hard to ensure that the next Farm Bill also reforms commodity programs and makes environmental protection and resource conservation central priorities.

Federal working lands conservation programs offer a bridge to a more sustainable agriculture system. The 2002 Farm Bill was a critical point in the history of conservation agriculture with its record increase in funding for conservation programs and the creation of the Conservation Security Program (CSP). The next Farm Bill is an opportunity to build on the base of support for working lands programs that reward existing conservation practices and en-

courage a shift away from industrial monocultures to resource conserving crop rotations, managed rotational grazing, and organic production methods. Conservation programs like CSP are good policy because they support farmers and farming practices that result in public goods like increased wildlife habitat and cleaner air and streams.

As this newsletter goes to print, the battle between the status quo and reform in the farm bill is well underway and the Conservation Security Program is one of several issues at the center of the conflict. On July 27th, the House of Representatives passed their version of the farm bill on a vote of 231-191. While taking several steps forward by increasing funding for programs such as the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Farmers Marketing Assistance Program, and Organic Certification Cost Share Program, the bill as a whole moves in reverse with its substantial weakening of current commodity and conservation payment limitations. The bill also slashes \$4.8 billion from the Conservation Security Program and delays *(Continued on page 5)*

Greening the Farm Bill-Continued from page 4

new sign-ups until 2012 – essentially killing the program. Despite the diligent effort of some freshman Democrat members of the Agriculture Committee to save CSP (Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand D-NY, Rep. Tim Walz D-MN, and Steve Kagen D-WI in particular), the tight budget environment meant that perennial favorites of high-powered interests won out.

The responsibility for delivering better U.S. farm policy now shifts onto the shoulders of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Fortunately, the Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Tom Harkin (D-IA) is a champion of reform and the father of the Conservation Security Program. Among other commendable provisions in his farm bill proposal is a new working lands program that melds the ongoing stewardship features of Conservation Security Program with the financial assistance component of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The new program is called the Comprehensive Stewardship Incentives Program (CSIP) and while the CSP and EQIP components of CSIP will maintain separate identities and funding, the application is streamlined and the program as a whole will be available nationwide with continuous enrollment. Melding the two programs into one will better facilitate program delivery and make them less susceptible to post-farm bill funding cuts.

The farm bill fight is far from over. Members of the Senate Agriculture Committee need to hear from you! Tell them to support Chairman Harkin’s farm bill package and ensure that farm bill policies revitalize family farms and rural communities in a way that conserves resources and promotes environmental benefits. For more information, please visit the Farm Bill Action Center at: www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org

Aimee Witteman is the Grassroots Organizing and Outreach Director for the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and a W.K. Kellogg Foundation Food and Society Policy Fellow.

“The farm bill fight is far from over. Members of the Senate Agriculture Committee need to hear from you! “

Denise Receives 2007 Spirit of Organic Award

In September, Denise O’Brien, WFAN founder and director, travels to Baltimore to be honored as a 2007 winner of the Spirit of Organic Award. She was selected by the Organic Farming Research Foundation to receive the award for a grower/producer. She is being recognized for her many years advocating for organic farmers and sustainable agriculture, her involvement in public policy, and her own 25 years as an organic farmer.

The Spirit of Organic awards have been presented by New Hope Natural Media since 2001, to honor "unsung heroes" of the organic

movement. In announcing this year’s awards they say:

“Award winners have come from all segments of the organic marketplace, demonstrating commitment, creativity, integrity, entrepreneurship, innovation, passion for organics, and a determination to change the world and the way we farm, eat and live. This remarkable group exemplifies the power of individuals and communities to create positive change through the principles and spirit of organic.”

The awards will be presented at a reception on September 26 at the

Natural Products Expo East trade show. A portion of the proceeds from ticket sales for the awards reception supports the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) and International Federation of Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). New Hope Natural Media, the award sponsor, is publisher of The Natural Foods Merchandiser, the leading trade journal for the natural and organic industry.

We’re proud of Denise, and glad to see her hard work, dedication and commitment to sustainable agriculture recognized in this national award.

Coordinator's Corner



Denise O'Brien
WFAN Coordinator

From My Desk...

This has been an interesting year of transition. The Board of WFAN has been working hard to put together our work for the upcoming years. There has been and continues to be reflecting and drawing upon the past ten years in order to move into the next ten. This takes a lot of time, effort and brain power.

The Board has also been busy approving a new logo design. Once that is in place our website will get a new look. A new feature on the website will be put in place – direct online giving. Up to this time someone interested in contributing to WFAN needed to print out the contribution form and mail it in. Direct online giving will be convenient and fast and will help build WFAN's contributor list.

As the work plans develop, we are keeping a vigil eye on the status of the farm bill - policy that will affect the future of agriculture. This newsletter contains articles that will help you understand some of the implications of the farm bill. I have been working on farm bills since 1985 and am very excited about the opportunity for change. This change will only come about when people

like you pressure Congress to do the right thing. Currently the House of Representatives has completed their first round of tasks and it is now in the hands of the Senate to complete theirs. Earlier in the year Senator Harkin, Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee was hoping to have the Farm Bill done by the end of September – it does not look as if that will happen. We will keep you posted with alerts as the time gets closer for actual floor debate. Always an exciting time!

Board member Joyce Lock has been working diligently for the past few years on a food trivia game that has now gone to press and is on the market. How exciting! I have known Joyce for years and am proud of her recent accomplishment. WFAN is fortunate to have such talent

serving on our Board of Directors.

Fall is a time for reflecting and savoring the final days of warmth. Spring and summer were productive months that are now coming to a close. Seasons put a timeframe around a year helping us to take notice that life is ever changing. While spring is my favorite month, I like fall for the beauty that is so prolific in the leaves, asters, mums and golden fields. The crickets and the cicadas give an element of time ticking – more pause for reflection and introspection. Enjoy these waning days of summer.

Denise

Watch for WFAN's new logo that will be coming to you soon. The Board of Directors has been working hard to make sure that WFAN is working on the needs of women involved with food and agriculture. In order to do that, we need your support. You will be receiving a letter that will share WFAN's accomplishments over the past ten years and asking for your support in order to continue our work into the future. Please consider giving a contribution for this end of the year letter. Thank you.

Support WFAN while you surf the Web



Women, Food, and Agriculture Network is now a part of GoodSearch.com. This is a new philanthropic web search engine run by yahoo.

So how can you help support WFAN while you surf the web? Simply go to www.goodsearch.com. Navigate to the middle of the screen, where there is a bar that reads "Who do you GoodSearch for?" Enter Women, Food, and Agriculture Network and then use the toolbar above to search the web. You can also download a toolbar to your computer so GoodSearch.com appears directly in your web browser.

How does it work? Search engines like Yahoo and Google generate revenue through ads that run along the side or top of the screen while you search. GoodSearch donates a part of that revenue back to the designated organization, allowing web surfers to earn approximately \$.01 for their designated organization for each search.

Although \$.01 does not seem like much money, if 1,000 WFAN supporters and their friends use GoodSearch twice per day they will raise \$7,350 for WFAN in one year.

Please consider making GoodSearch.com your new search engine, and as you browse the web this winter for information about farming practices, conferences, or as you place your seed order for spring, you can help support Women, Food, and Agriculture Network. Don't forget to tell your friends and family too!

World Rural Women's Day - October 15, 2007

THE PURPOSE OF THE DAY

The day provides rural women and their organizations with a focal point to :

1. Raise the profile of rural women,
2. Sensitize both government and public to their crucial, yet largely unrecognized roles, and
3. Promote action in their support. Initiatives on how to celebrate this day are left to individual organizations and communities, according to their own traditions and requirements. Activities or events should be concrete and visible. This action undertaken by rural and farming women in all parts of the world on the very same day, in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation, would strengthen the impact of the day.

FACTS ON RURAL WOMEN

- Rural women, mainly farmers, are at least 1.6 billion and represent more than a quarter of the total world population.
- Women produce on average more than half of all the food that is grown: up to 80 percent in Africa, 60 percent in Asia, between 30 and 40 percent in Latin America and Western countries.
- Women own only 2 percent of the land, and receive only one percent of all agricultural credit.
- Only 5 percent of all agricultural extension resources are directed to women.
- Women represent two third of all illiterate people.
- The number of rural women living in poverty has doubled since 1970.

Visit www.rural-womens-day.org for further information.

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