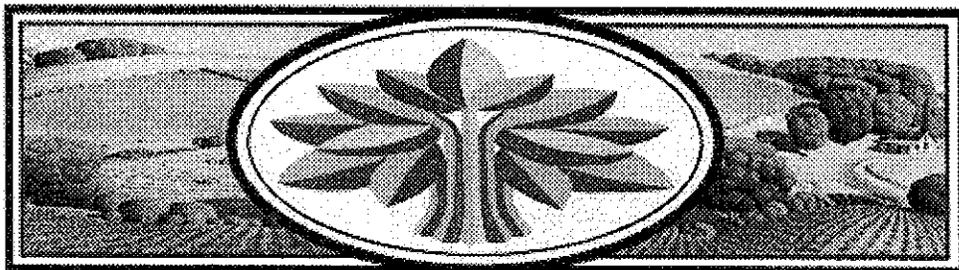


Women, Food & Agriculture Network

The Soy Sisters are Making Over Iowa's Soybeans



by *Karie Wiltshire*

Francene Coons and Alesia Lacina each considered themselves shy two years ago. But today at the Iowa State Fair demonstration, that claim isn't so evident. An informative laughter-spiced presentation about their product has captured visitors. Even skeptics leave with a new view of where tofu and soyfoods fit in the Midwest. Alesia's husband Tom observed, "We produce so many soybeans—it's an irony we're surrounded by soybeans—a sea of soybeans—but we're wondering what we should eat. We're ignoring the obvious."

Today, Francene and Alesia, a.k.a. "the Soy Sisters," together with their husbands Dave Coons and Tom Lacina, are

changing that with their soyfoods business, Midwest Harvest. They've discovered that soy promises to be an innovative way to contribute to value-added agriculture in Iowa. Soy now astonishes science with previously unrealized health benefits ranging from coronary vascular disease reduction to prevention of osteoporosis.

In January 1998, Tom began thinking about different approaches to farming. Growing organic soybeans, processing these into high quality food on their third-generation farm, and packaging the food for the final consumer offered roles for the talents of family. Francene is the office manager, Dave the operations manager, Alesia the graphics designer, and Tom the farmer, lawyer, and business executive.

"We've got a team of people who know what's going on and have lots of perseverance," says Tom. "We've been able to make something happen out of a very small, modest beginning. With four people bringing four kinds of talents

(Soy, continued on page 7)

Mission

The *Women, Food, and Agriculture Network* links and amplifies women's voices on issues of food systems, sustainable communities and environmental integrity.



Calendar

September 20-21: Positively Iowa Assembly for Sustainability 2000 (3rd Annual Rural Congress). Email: posiowa@positivelyiowa.org. Web: www.positivelyiowa.org.

September 22-24: Urban-Rural Food Systems Conference. East Troy, Wisconsin. Contact Michael Fields Agricultural Institute at 262-642-3303.

October 6-8: Taking Back Our Food, Farms and Playgrounds, a conference on the interlocking issues of pesticide reform, environmental health, genetic engineering and corporate control of agriculture. Redwood City, California. For more information, see website: www.panna.org/octConf.html. Contact Christine Lee, 415-981-6205 ext. 382; email: ctlee4@panna.org

October 8-10: Engaged Institutions' Role in Biotechnology Education. A national symposium for educators and administrators to explore how biotechnology education can be improved. Request an e-mail registration form by sending a message to biotech@iastate.edu or by visiting the symposium website: www.biotech.iastate.edu.

October 15: World March of Women 2000, Washington D.C., to show that supporters of women's rights are the overwhelming majority. Assemble at 11 am in Freedom Plaza (Penn Ave. & 13th St., NW), rally 1:00 to 4:00 pm on the Ellipse (Constitution Ave & 17th St, NW). WFAN is a sponsoring organization. Website: www.worldmarch.org

November 3: Genetically Modified Food: Risks, Rewards, & Realities. Madison, Wisconsin. Website: www.wisconsinacademy.org/conference/. Contact: Michael Goodman, tel.: 608-263-1692; email: conference@wisconsinacademy.org

November 9-10: The Northeast Agricultural Development Symposium, Land, People and Profits: Integrating Agriculture, Communities and Economic Development. Albany, New York. For information on registration, co-sponsorship or exhibits, contact Kathy Ruhf at nesawg@smallfarm.org or 413-323-4531, or Roger Clapp at rclapp@together.net.

November 10-12: Tri-state Women's Fall Harvest Gathering for Women and Sustainable Agriculture. Spring Valley, MN, at the Good Earth Village. Contact Stacey Brown at 712-243-3264 or wfan@nishna.net for more information. (See article next page.)

May 11-13, 2001: 3-day Biointensive Mini-Farming/Gardening workshop by John Jeavons. Madison, Wisconsin. Contact Dave Shiffert, Eagle Heights Community Gardens, 909-D Eagle Heights, Madison, WI 53705-1611; tel: 608-238-7966; email: drshiffe@students.wisc.edu; website: www.sit.wisc.edu/~ehgarden.

June 10, 2001: Joint 2001 Annual Meetings of the Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society (AFHVS) and the Assoc. for the Study of Food and Society (ASFS). Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs Conference Center, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Paper abstracts or proposals for sessions/panels are due February 16, 2001. Contact: Helene Murray, Local Organizing Committee Chair, 411 Borlaug Hall, St. Paul, MN 55108-1013; 612-625-8235; email: murra021@maroon.tc.umn.edu.

Iowa Water Quality Reports Available Online.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources recently issued water quality assessment reports for Iowa. These reports are prepared biennially by state environmental agencies and are required by Section 305(b) of the federal Clean Water Act. The released reports, prepared for the 1998 reporting cycle, are available at www.state.ia.us/epd/wtrq/305b_00/305b.htm. A limited number of printed copies are also available. For a printed copy, contact John Olson, IDNR, at 515-281-8905 or email: john.olson@dnr.state.ia.us.



Women, Food and Agriculture Network

This newsletter is published by the **Women, Food and Agriculture Network**, a Tides Center Project with the help of the Stanley Foundation, Muscatine, Iowa, and Iowa State University Extension, Ames, Iowa. We welcome suggestions, stories, and news from your part of the world. Our emphasis is on women's lives, their relationships, communities and families.

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WFAN Fall Conference with Minnesota and Wisconsin

What have we as women harvested in our lives through our work with sustainable agriculture? What have we harvested from our farms and from our unique experiences? Women, Food & Agriculture Network, along with the Wisconsin Women's Sustainable Farming Network and Women in Sustainable Agriculture Minnesota, invite you to the first Tri-state Women's Fall Harvest Gathering for Women and Sustainable Agriculture. This three day conference, Nov. 10-12, will be held in Spring Valley, Minnesota, at the Good Earth Village, and will feature networking, practical workshops, and fun events to connect us to each other, to our food, and to the earth.

Each of the three sponsoring organizations are building networks within

their own states and have been for years. We will use this conference as a time to build new networks, state to state and individual to individual. Women are forging paths in sustainable agriculture, often without resources and support. Building and strengthening these networks will allow women to utilize each other as resources and as support networks.

The conference will start Friday evening with introductions and a speaker, followed by a day of workshops on Saturday. The workshops will include topics such as winterizing your orchards, animals, and gardens, using your woods, chain saw operation, and livestock enterprises for women. A story teller, healing rituals, music, and dancing await us with the full moon around the campfire Saturday evening.

Sunday morning will be more discussion and a closing. The Good Earth Village and Grown Locally, a grower's cooperative from northeast Iowa, are helping us supply sustainably produced food for our meals.

We hope that this conference will be an event that will carry on in future years. Please join us the second weekend in November to share with us your harvests. The cost is \$65 for the weekend. Some scholarship money will be available and car pools will be going from all three states. Please contact Stacey Brown at 712-243-3264 or wfan@nishna.net for more information. Registration forms are forthcoming. We look forward to sharing this exciting event with you and to seeing you in November.

Next Year, WFAN Representation in Minneapolis!

by Anne C. Bellows, Rutgers University

Annually, the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society (AFHVS) and The Association for the Study of Food and Society (ASFS) cosponsor a joint conference on food and agricultural issues. This year, "Millennial Stews: Food and Food Systems in the Global City" was held in New York City, June 1-4. Next year, the conference will be in Minneapolis from June 7-10. Although remaining top-heavy with academics, the conference encourages activists to a greater extent than most university-connected meetings. WFAN members of all backgrounds might consider participating and/or attending.

The program from this year's Millennial Stews Conference can still be viewed on the web: www.nyu.edu/education/nutrition/foodconference/. Patricia Allen from the UC-Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems organized several excellent panels that probed the tension between globalization and local food resistance movements. A major concern

is that wonderful local projects do not and perhaps cannot change the fundamental inequities in our market system. Class conflict, the division of rich and poor, is too often left out of sustainability.

Kathy Lawrence, outgoing director of Just Foods in New York City, participated in a series of panels that identified ways, including CSA's, to link low-income consumers with metropolitan area farmers.

One evening the organizers staged a one-woman play, "A Good Day to Pie," about the making of a young, pie-throwing anarchist who wages battle against the food industry. The actress was Rebecca Pridmore (jrp@interport.net); playwright, Daniel Kinch; and director, David Szlasa. I recommend that if you ever have the funds, bring them in.

A flyer announced a forthcoming educational video for high school and college level learning, entitled, "Women Food & Family: Reflections on Gender and Food," by Judy Paisley and Jennifer Welsh of the School of Nutrition,

Ryerson Polytechnic University in Toronto. The 67 minute video, due to be released in early fall, features the voices of seven women—academics and community organizers—who link the social, political, and economic elements in the everyday experience of food. Contact Jennifer Welsh for more information: jwelsh@acs.ryerson.ca.

It would be great to have a WFAN presence at the next annual conference. Next year's conference will take place at the Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs Conference Center at the University of Minnesota. Contributed paper abstracts or proposals for sessions and panels are due February 16, 2001. For the first time, AFHVS and ASFS are trying to set up student paper competitions and awards.

The conference announcement is not yet on the web, however, progress can be tracked through the AFHVS website: <http://web.clas.ufl.edu/users/rhaynes/afhvs/>, or by contacting the Local Organizing Committee Chair, Helene Murray: murra021@maroon.tc.umn.edu.

Rural Women's Organizations in Guerrero, Mexico

By Silvia Alemán, Iowa State University, Sociology Department

Women's rural organizations in developing countries are an important means for improving quality of life. In Mexico several rural women's organizations have developed throughout the country. Mexican geography is very diverse, therefore rural women have different cultural characteristics, while sharing some things in common.

This paper is related specifically to women's rural organizations in the state of Guerrero, which is located in the South of Mexico. It's area is 64,458km², with a population of 2,916,567. The rural population is 45.4% and the indigenous population is 10.6%. This state is one of the poorest Mexican states, historically characterized by social violence. The Sierra Madre del Sur crosses it, so natural conditions do not help agricultural development; nevertheless, in some valleys and on the coast, agriculture is successful. Acapulco, Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo and Taxco are cities for international tourism, the most important economic

Rural women's organizations have to face the challenges of poverty and increasing gender equity.

sector in the state followed closely by forestry and mining. Industry has only elementary development.

Women's Rural Organizations

Guerrero has an active rural organization movement (mixed gender and female), but women's rural organizations are fewer and smaller than mixed gender rural organizations led by men. Nevertheless, there is an important effort by rural women to become organized.

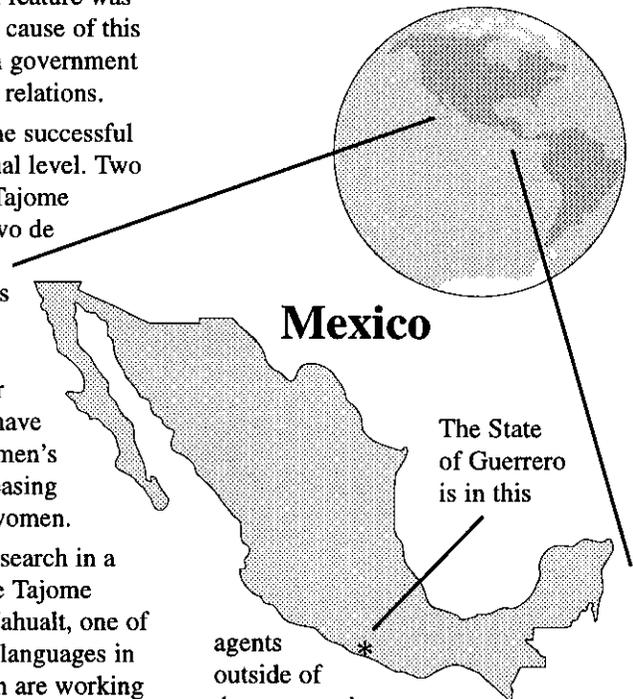
Between 1979 and 1994, 521 rural women's organizations were created, most of them at the community level. They varied widely in size from 6 to 500 members, with 15 the most common size. Organizations with close to 500 members are few. Most of these organizations were created by governmental

agencies and one common feature was their short active life. One cause of this failure was dependence on government in the form of subordinate relations.

However, there are some successful organizations at the regional level. Two of them are "Titekitoke Tajome Sihuame" and "El Colectivo de Mujeres de la Costa Grande". Despite problems from within and outside, these organizations have succeeded because of their extent of coverage. They have responded to practical women's needs and developed increasing equity between men and women.

In 1996, I conducted research in a case study on "Titekitoke Tajome Sihuame". This name is Nahuatl, one of the most important native languages in Mexico, it means, "women are working together." I found that the participation of members is affected by factors which sometimes act as facilitators (rather few) and at other times as obstacles (rather frequent). At the family level the obstacles are dependent members, increased work, husband opposition, female headed households, lack of support for house work and old age. At the community level the obstacles are lack of transportation, lack of local authorities' support, criticism by women and men non-members and lack of social infrastructure. At the organizational level there is not enough training, human capital, empowerment methodology and financial capital. Illiteracy of the members and conflicts with mixed gender organizations also have negative impact on the organization.

The women members work in small enterprises, for example, they raise pigs and collect savings; they have small stores and mill machines. Their participation is sustained by their wish to overcome multiple needs linked to socioeconomic poverty. Despite limited economic profitability, there is an incentive for women's participation. Social profitability is the greatest incentive as small enterprise gives a service to the community, and some women have increased their capabilities by learning how to deal with



agents outside of the community.

The women's change toward more equitable gender relationships is just beginning. As women learn about human rights, their relationships with their husbands become more democratic and they gain community respect. The most important gender gains are observed in the leaders of community groups.

It is very common that some women turn away from their organizations, while others, in spite of the obstacles, continue working in them. It is really fantastic to see how these women with scant education become very active and make changes inside their families and their communities. In the process of organizing they have to pay some costs, but they also profit. They challenge community traditions and the belief that "the place for women farmers is in their houses".

Usually women farmers are married when they become members of organizations, and they are the heads of the family when their husbands migrate seeking jobs. They wake up around 5:00am and go to bed at 9:00pm. Rural women are busier in the rainy season because they participate in agricultural activities. This season begins in June and ends in October. They spend some time in religious activities, listening to radio and in

(Mexico, continued on page7)

The Rural Womyn Zone: www.wowwomen.com/ruralzone/frontpage.html

by Jo Leath

"You know you're a rural womyn if....you lock your car doors to stop the neighbours putting squash on the passenger seat."

"I was late coming to the Internet because there was no local service provider and being on-line meant a long distance call," says Lynda Harper, who is currently managing a 300-cow dairy farm in Colorado. "When the first local ISP went in, I eagerly looked for other rural women 'out there' somewhere. My search turned up large organizations concentrating on rural women in Third World Countries, but nothing specific to rural women in the US"

Concepts that Harper brought to the formation of the RWZ include the idea that this is the Third-and-a-Half World. "Rural North America is known for political conservatism. Women in the US experience barriers to full recognition and participation in farm life and economy," she points out. "Yet we receive little attention from rural organizations. Additionally, there is an Ag/Fem Gap. Ag women don't focus on women's issues and feminist groups don't understand rural issues. RWZ attempts to bridge that gap. Being feminist - politically different - in a conservative place can be very isolating. In order to make progress and create alternative visions, women need a separate and safe place to gather. The Internet is a perfect solution for rural women."

In the midst of a winter's insomnia, Harper began to design a web site in some free space she had found on-line. At first, she attempted to write down everything she would like urban feminists to understand about the rural woman's experience. Somehow the site would not quite come together. "Then I started having fun," she laughs, "I began creating a tongue-in-cheek scrapbook called 'Rural Grassroots Feminist Organizing'. It became the center of the first Rural Womyn Zone web site." www.wowwomen.com/ruralzone/scrap1.html

Then Harper began to search for like-minded women across the net. As a

member of several e-lists and on-line feminist groups, she was able to approach an extensive array of women.

"Lynda and I were on fivers [e-mail list] and she twisted my arm to join." jokes Minerva Kalenandi, a self-described Charter Member in Oregon. In rural Illinois, Ellen Reed had recently begun to access the Internet, and became involved with WOW (Women On-line Worldwide).

"The first thing I remember was Lynda posting to the WOW boards. She was saying something about rural women, rural feminist issues. I absolutely, literally yelped in my chair at home! I immediately posted back. She posted the link to the zone. It was the pictures, the rural scrapbook. I HOWLED with laughter! I felt ... YES! There are THINKING women out there who understand my ruralness!

"I had just come from a town of about 4000, the biggest town in the county, and I had been in a town of 900 for only a short time. I immediately subbed to the list - and there were only a few folks on it then. But the warmth and the THINKING were earth-shaking to me. I thought Lynda's sense of humor was hysterical. I had been feeling like I was going brain dead. My beliefs were foreign to the locals, my ideology was considered heresy, and my every move felt scrutinized and despised. But at the Zone, I suddenly found that I could CONVERSE with other wimmin who 'had a clue.'

"I knew that WOW was interested in the welfare of women, and providing a safe and nurturing place for women to connect via the cyber world. I also knew that WOW might provide page space for women's issues sites.

"Lynda was struggling to make everything fit and grow at her local ISP, so I just contacted the WOW administrator and had Lynda contact her. The reaction was what I thought it would be - PLEASE encourage Lynda to bring the Zone to WOW. And I did.

"WOW liked us and asked us to move in with them," says Harper. "Now we have message boards and plenty of room for the site to grow, and the opportunity

to network with a larger group of women. All of the enhancements to RWZ have been created by a group of women who have met only in cyberspace. On-line organizing works!"

Primary communication among members of the Zone is through the Ruralwomyn e-mail rural feminist activist forum. Grassroots organizing, women's health, welfare reform, books, lifestyle, back-to-the-land, sustainable ag, farming, friendships, reaching out to other women on-line!

"At some point," says Reed, "we found that we were spending a lot of time on the Ruralwomyn list talking about domestic violence and sexual assault issues since so many of us worked, or had worked, in that field. We decided to open the RuralConnect list." RuralConnect is a working list for sharing, networking, and problem solving around sexual and domestic violence.

In addition, the Zone hosts Ruralwomyn chat, defined as wild and woolly rural fems leaping tall mountains and crossing wide prairies in a single bound! The Rural Womyn Zone boards at the WOW. Message boards provide a place for those who cannot deal with the high volume of the Ruralwomyn list. A list called TrainStation allows groups to get together for targeted training sessions on rural advocacy issues.

Rural Wimmin Writers are welcome to join the EDUM e-mail list, named for "E"ditors "D"on't "U"nderstand "M"e; the cry of the underpublished wimmin who write about rural situations.

The RuralWomyn Zone is celebrating its fourth anniversary this summer. E-mail: ruralwomyn@yahoo.com.

(Jo Leath is a writer, activist and organic grower living on 185 acres of mixed use land in Nova Scotia, Canada.)



Denise O'Brien Inducted into Hall of Fame

by Stacey Brown

On August 26, 2000, four new and remarkable women were inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame and recognized by the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women for their significant contributions to Iowa and Iowa women. Denise O'Brien, the coordinator and founder of Women, Food, and Agriculture Network, was one of those four women.

The Iowa Women's Hall of Fame was established in 1975. Each year the Commission solicits nominations of women who have dedicated their lives and work to improving the quality of life in this state. The inductees are then chosen by a five-member selection committee and honored at a special ceremony chaired by Lieutenant Governor, Sally J. Pederson.

Twenty years ago, politics and agriculture merged for Denise. She, along with her husband Larry, decided that she would go out and work on issues for change while Larry would stay home to take care of the kids and the farm. Those twenty years of hard work for justice in agriculture birthed Women, Food, and Agriculture Network and earned Denise this well deserved honor as a member of the Women's Hall of Fame.

Congratulations, Denise, on this honor as a new member in the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame. Change may take a long time, but if people aren't persistent and if they don't believe, it's not going to happen. A vision for a better world and for a better agriculture exist because of Denise and others who made their lives political working for change.

*Denise O'Brien,
hands-on farmer,
the woman who has
one foot firmly planted
on her family farm
near Atlantic,
and the other foot
planted just as firmly
on the global terra firma,
calling intelligent
attention to
rural injustices
and to the blessings
of farm fresh food
as food is meant to be.*

(description by Beverly Everett,
farmer from New Sharon, Iowa.)

by Denise O'Brien

(Remarks upon
induction into Iowa
Women's Hall of Fame.)

I grew up in the town of Atlantic and had no clue what farming was about. I learned the art of farming from Larry who has taught me so much about respect for our mother earth and for the creatures that inhabit the earth. Many of you know the story of when I first met Larry and he said he was going to farm organically. In my mind I thought "wow, how political!" Never did I realize just how political it would be!

As I learned how to farm, raise children and be a part of my community, I started realizing through many different avenues that there was something drastically wrong going on in the world of rural communities and agriculture. That is the time when farming and politics started to merge for Larry and me. In 1982 we participated in a workshop where our part was to talk about alternative agriculture. We had been growing strawberries for a couple of years and had some experience. As the workshop progressed we began to realize that there was something going on we weren't aware of. Other people on the panel were talking about losing their farms

Never did I realize just how political it would be!

and being foreclosed on and going into bankruptcy. The whole room was trying to hold back tears – it was so painful to hear what these other farm couples were going through. On the way home Larry and I made a decision that we must become involved and made a commitment to each other that I would go out and work on issues and try to change things and that Larry would stay home, take care of the kids and farm. We have never to this day regretted that decision.

Because of our commitment 20 years ago, I can now be considered a leader, and can be inducted into the Hall of Fame. I wish that agriculture was better off for the work that I have done, but when you look at the big picture right now, farmers are barely able to hang on. We have hog factories dotting the landscape, we have water that is barely drinkable, we have small towns closing down and we have a population of young people in the countryside who would love to farm but have no opportunity given the current trend of factory farming. Many of us are sounding the alarms. Many of you in this room are working just as hard as I am for things to be different, but always wondering

when the rest of society will catch on that something needs to change. I dread the day when the question is asked, "What happened to the farmers?"

To leave you on a positive note, things are changing, clearly not fast enough, but they are. There is a new type of agriculture on the horizon. That new ag involves women as they have been involved before only they are taking leadership roles. Examples are Community Supported Agriculture, CSAs, where eaters buy memberships to farms for the farms' bounties. Direct marketing, community kitchens, farmers markets. Consumers and farmers together are working for change. Tearing down hog factories, creating GMO free zones, breaking down the barriers that have been created by agribusiness, all of these are the way to a more healthy, humane and sane planet. It is imperative that we take on the challenge of agribusiness and put a stop to the tyrannical, centralized, inhumane way business is currently being done. We need justice in agriculture! We need more farmers not fewer! We need to be proud of a type of agriculture that treats humans and animals with respect!

The Soy Sisters are Making Over Iowa's Soybeans

(continued from page 1)

together, we're doing it not only as a family, but also as very good friends."

Their rapidly expanding sales reach mainstream grocery stores, health food stores and specialty restaurants throughout the Midwest. The creative work ethic of the Soy Sisters takes them through mornings of tofu production to afternoon design and marketing, to evening cooking classes that they offer through the Iowa Valley Community College. With tofu, Francene and Alesia found themselves in a new role: as heralds of soy to the traditional meat and potato.

A distinct bean tree in the foreground of Grant Wood's 'Young Corn' visually illustrates Midwest Harvest's approach. "The bean tree illustrates something more dramatic than the rows of beans in the field.

Soybeans are a very dynamic plant and I want people to see soy that way," says Alesia.

Francene looks at the bean tree as a symbol of the encompassing nutritional value of soy. A traditional Midwestern cook herself, she says, "Our products are excellent stand-alone foods - and because of that it makes them easy to incorporate into everyday dishes. You don't have to eliminate animal protein from your diet to use tofu. With it, we're hoping to give you a flavorful option—an alternative way to cook, a new flavor to try."

Gauging public interest by webpage visits, purchases of the Tofu Cook Book, and articles in prominent newspapers, there is enthusiasm throughout the Midwest. Iowans, as residents of one of the top soybean producing states in the nation, are increasingly seeing soy products as good food.

Beyond reaching the eaters who seek the local, organic, and miraculously healthy soy products, the Midwest Harvest family is finding itself in a leadership role in developing the Iowa value added agriculture system. As President of Midwest Harvest, and with a position on the Iowa Food Policy Council, Tom Lacina sees his business as a model of

Iowan agriculture. "I'd like Midwest Harvest to maintain a focus on creating an economically viable and socially responsible food system for the U.S. Midwest Harvest is a very person-oriented business. We give a face to the product, much the same way that family farming gave a face to Iowa farming."

This summer, while working with multiple businesses, Midwest Harvest began marketing a family of organic soy foods including low-fat soy flour and textured soy protein.

Francene noted, "This is just the beginning of our family—we're looking at so many soy products—we will be developing and marketing several additional products in the very near future."

Tom's reflective summary of the birth and development of Midwest Harvest is perhaps the best indicator of Midwest Harvest's purpose. "The stuff that fills our days is part of a story. Through our stories, we don't determine the value of the business by the dollar but by whether it is a good story we tell."

Midwest Harvest Corporation contact information: <http://www.midwestharvest.com> 3635 Hwy 146 Grinnell, IA 50112 1-641-236-5170.

(Karie Wiltshire is a research associate with Midwest Harvest. She coordinates a CSA project in the Poweshick county area through a grant from Grinnell College.)

"I'd like Midwest Harvest to maintain a focus on creating an economically viable and socially responsible food system for the U.S. Midwest Harvest is a very person-oriented business.

We give a face to the product, much the same way that family farming gave a face to Iowa farming."

Rural Women's Organizations in Guerrero, Mexico

(Mexico, continued from page 4)

some cases watching T.V.

Mainly in indigenous regions, women perform varied activities, as housewives, working in agriculture, and sometimes making handicrafts. If they are members of organizations, they develop activities related to small enterprises near to or in their own homes.

Conclusions

Rural women's organizations have to face the challenges of poverty and increasing gender equity. In order to be successful in these goals, they need support from outside in the form of human and financial capital. Support is important, mainly at the beginning of the process of organizing. Now, with more democracy in Mexico, the opportunity for rural organizations to expand for their own development has increased. The effort to improve conditions of life in the countryside continues for rural women's organizations.

WFAN Listserv Grows to 70 Subscribers

WFAN-list is a forum for discussion and information sharing among members of the Women, Food and Agriculture Network. If you have paid your membership dues, you are automatically eligible to subscribe. Just send a message to majordomo@iastate.edu with the command "subscribe wfan" (without quotation marks).

Another way to subscribe is by completing the membership form on the back of this newsletter and checking the box indicating your desire to subscribe. If you are not a paid member but want to try out the list, send a message to bwells@iastate.edu. Give us your name, phone, and postal address, explain that you heard about the list from this newsletter, and indicate that you support WFAN's mission to link and amplify women's voices on issues of food systems, sustainable communities and environmental integrity.

WFAN is an unmoderated list. Senders are responsible for content.

**Women, Food
& Agriculture
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A Tides Center Project
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Atlantic, IA 50022

Women, Food, & Agriculture Network links
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