

# Women, Food & Agriculture Network

## What One Rural Woman Can Do



Women, Food and Agriculture Network lost a friend and advocate on January 24, 2001. Beverly Beth George Everett spent a lifetime in programs advocating equity for women and inclusion of women in every aspect of decision-making. She worked from her home in rural Iowa but traveled worldwide, joining groups, giving speeches, and personally delivering the message of equity for women.

"I met Beverly about 20 years ago at a meeting about the United Nation's World Women's Conference in Nairobi in 1985," says Denise O'Brien of WFAN. "Since then we would see each other at meetings from time to time. Just the fact that she was out there always being an advocate for women, gave me so much hope. I considered Beverly a mentor in the highest regard."

A short biography of Beverly Everett at the Iowa Women's Archives begins:

"Beverly George Everett, farmer, substitute teacher, speaker, writer, and professional volunteer, was born on January 28, 1926 in Janesville, Iowa to Floyd and Florence George. Her parents were dairy farmers and musicians so Everett and her brother, Neal, grew up surrounded by Iowa farmland and music. After gradua-

ting from Janesville High School, she attended Iowa State College (now Iowa State University) where she obtained a bachelors degree in institutional management in 1947. It was at Iowa State that she met her husband Lawrence Everett....

"After college they moved to New Sharon, Iowa where they set up farming a 300-acre spread. Five children were born there.... All five completed programs at Iowa State University.

"Everett's education did not stop at Iowa State. She took various post graduate courses from the University of Iowa and the University of California, Berkeley. She also obtained teacher certification through William Penn College in Oskaloosa, Iowa. In 1984 she was awarded a honorary doctorate through Iowa Wesleyan College.

"Beverly Everett's organizational work began at an early age in 4-H. Several of her projects included planting a victory garden, redecorating her bedroom (featured in an article in *Successful Farming*, September 1941), and creating a record book that took second place in a National 4-H contest. She later became a 4-H club leader.

"During the 1950s and 1960s, much  
(Everett, 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

**March 11-13, 2001: 20th Rural Ministry Conference, "Patchwork of Faith and Rural Culture."** Dubuque, Iowa. For more information call 319-589-0273 or email ruralmin@mwci.net.

**March 16-17, 2001: 12th Annual Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference, "Organic Vision: Food for Community, Hope for the Future."** University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse. To receive a conference flyer, call 715-772-6819; write UMOFC, P.O. Box 339, Spring Valley, WI 54767; website: [www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org); email: lizrose@mwt.net.

**March 31: Women, Food and Agriculture Network spring meeting.** Contact Stacey at 712-243-3264 or email: wfan@metc.net.

**April 5, 12, 17, 2001: Taking the Road Less Traveled in Science, Math, Engineering and Technology.** Career Conference for Girls, grades 6-12. \$13. Linda Dutton, Program for Women in Science and Engineering, Iowa State University. Call: 515-294-5319; email: dutton@iastate.edu.

**April 12 -13, 2001: Women's and Gender Studies Undergraduate Research Symposium on Feminism and the Environment: "Globalism, Agency and Action."** Toledo, Ohio. Featuring Winona LaDuke as keynote speaker. Conference website: <http://www.womens-gender-studies.utoledo.edu/symposium.htm>.

**April 20, 2001: International Day of Action** in Quebec City. The Anti-Capitalist Convergence will be April 18-22 held around a meeting of the next ministerial-level Summit of the Americas to implement the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The FTAA extends the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) to the entire hemisphere. For more information visit [www.a20.org](http://www.a20.org).

**April 29, 2001: Dolores Huerta**, co-founder of the United Farm Workers of America. King Chapel, Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa.

**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](http://www.sit.wisc.edu/~ehgarden).

**June 7-10, 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. Call 612-625-8235; email: murra021@maroon.tc.umn.edu.

**June 24, 2001: Getting to Know Henry A. Wallace Day**, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Henry A. Wallace birthplace home near Orient, Iowa. Prairie Harvest CSA field day. Fred Kirschenmann, Director of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, speaking at 3 p.m. Contact the Henry A. Wallace Country Life Center at 641-337-5016.

### Twelfth Annual Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference

The twelfth Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference (UMOFC) will be held March 16th and 17th, at the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse. The theme for this year's conference is "Organic Vision: Food for Community, Hope for the Future."

The conference will offer more than 50 practical workshops and over 150 exhibitors. Fred Kirschenmann, Director of Iowa's Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, will speak on, "Two Visions for Agriculture: Which Will We Choose?"

Denise O'Brien, WFAN coordinator will give a workshop on celebrating women's lives.

Odessa Piper, Proprietor/Chef of Madison, Wisconsin's L'Etoile restaurant, will address the "Spirit of Place" as she explores the role of cooperation between farmers and the environment as a path to great food and great culture.

Registration is \$95 for Friday and Saturday and is limited on a first-come, first-served basis.

On Thursday, March 15, the conference will host the premier session of the Organic University. The cost, including meals and course materials, is \$125 each.

To receive a conference and university flyer, call 715-772-6819 or write

### Women, Food and Agriculture Network

This newsletter is published by the *Women, Food and Agriculture Network*, a Tides Center Project with the help of 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. We welcome first person articles, analyses, book or video reviews, original poetry and art, and letters to editor. Deadlines for upcoming issues:

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WI 54767 or visit the website at  
[www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org).

## Resources

### Women's Business Center

The Center for Rural Affairs Rural Enterprise Assistance Program (REAP) has received a grant from the U.S. Small Business Association to create a women's business center in Nebraska. REAP intends to create a center without "walls". For more information contact Jeff Reynolds at 402-656-3091 or [jeffr@alltel.net](mailto:jeffr@alltel.net)

### Report on Feeding 1.5 Billion

How will the world feed an extra 1.5 billion people over the next two decades when current farming methods have already jeopardized world food production? The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the World Resources Institute (WRI) pose this question in a report released recently. For full text and graphics, visit: <http://ens.lycos.com/ens/feb2001/2001L-02-14-11.html>.

### Books

**Greenbook '99: A Decade of Tools, 1999** by the Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program (ESAP), Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Highlights experimental work of farmers, researchers and educators in sustainable agriculture. Includes chapters on alternative crops, cropping systems and soil fertility, fruits and vegetables, learning systems, livestock and whole farm systems. Also features essays on farmers' experiences with the Sustainable Agriculture On-Farm Demonstration Grant Program (SARE), as well as updates on ESAP activities in the Sustainable Agriculture Loan Program, soil quality, whole farm planning and organic farming. 154 pp. Free. Contact ESAP, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 90 W. Plato Blvd., Saint Paul, MN 55107; tel.: 651-296-7673; email: [alison.fish@state.mn.us](mailto:alison.fish@state.mn.us); website: <http://www.mda.state.mn.us>.

**Alternatives to Insecticides for Managing Vegetable Insects: Proceedings of a Farmer/Scientist**

**Conference, 1999** by the Natural Resource, Agriculture, and Engineering Service (NRAES) Cooperative Extension.

Discusses effects of plant and soil health on susceptibility to pests, biological control, current strategies used by organic farmers and specific crops and insects. Conference participants included farmers, farm advisors and scientists. Includes list of commercially available biological control agents. 80 pp. US\$8 plus shipping and handling. Contact NRAES, Cooperative Extension, 152 Riley-Robb Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853-5701; phone (607) 255-7654; fax (607) 254-8770; email [nraes@cornell.edu](mailto:nraes@cornell.edu); Web site <http://www.nraes.org>.

**Suppliers of Beneficial Organisms in North America, 1997** by Charles D. Hunter.

Provides general information on beneficial organisms and their use against pests. Lists 142 suppliers of over 130 different species of beneficial organisms sold for use as biological pest control in Canada, the United States and Mexico. Includes scientific name index and list of references and Web site on biological control and Integrated Pest Management (IPM). 32 pp. Free. Contact State of California Department of Pesticide Regulation, Environmental Monitoring & Pest Management, 830 K St., Sacramento, CA 95814-3510; tel.: 916-324-4100; website: <http://www.cdpr.ca.gov>.

## Opportunities

### Farm Internships

Interested in farm internships, or maybe having an intern on your farm? WFAN is implementing an intern program, Making Connections: Aspiring Female Farmers and Farmland, funded by a grant from Ben and Jerry's. This grant, will help WFAN mentor, guide and develop the leadership of future women farmers through placement on farms growing crops for human consumption. WFAN will build bridges between young women and women farmers starting this growing season. If you or someone you know are interested, please contact Stacey Brown, WFAN Mission Intern, at [neha\\_stacey@hotmail.com](mailto:neha_stacey@hotmail.com) or 712-243-3264.

## Future Organic Farmers

by Tanya Meyer, State Outreach Coordinator, USDA-NRCS

Are you an experienced organic farmer with a desire to share your knowledge with future Iowa organic farmers?

Are you just beginning to farm organically or have very little experience and would benefit from an organic mentor?

If so, this program is probably for you! USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) with many partners, including the WFAN, is coordinating the Future Organic Farmers of Iowa program which will partner experienced and new organic farmers to encourage enhanced information, education, and networking opportunities.

The program will assist in developing future Iowa organic farmers' knowledge of and skills with organic farm production and increase future Iowa organic farmers' ability to profitably market organic crops.

The program will link similar and compatible organic mentors with future organic farmers for personal and "hands-on" sharing of knowledge and experience. Mentors will participate in a training session and receive a resource manual which will also be given to each future organic farmer participating in the program. Information will be provided through a listserv, field days, and informational meetings. Information on the requirements for certification will be provided, allowing that farm to offer and sell products as "organically produced."

The program is slated to begin with the 2001 growing season. Potential organic mentors and future organic farmers are urged to apply now. Organic mentors will receive a nominal payment for their time and efforts.

For more information or to obtain a program application, contact: Tanya Meyer, State Outreach Coordinator, USDA-NRCS, 300 W. Welsh St., P O Box 87, Williamsburg, IA 52361; tel.: 319-668-8110; email: [tanya.meyer@ia.usda.gov](mailto:tanya.meyer@ia.usda.gov).

# Jane Bush -- Apple Farmer from Southern Michigan

by Denise O'Brien

Our feature member this month is Jane Bush, an apple grower from southern Michigan. Members of WFAN from Iowa met Jane in 1998 in Washington, DC at the International Conference on Women in Agriculture sponsored by the USDA. Since that time Jane has remained an integral part of WFAN and a close friend.

## Where are you originally from?

**Jane:** I am from Farmington, Michigan, about two hours north of Detroit. My parents raised my four sisters, a brother, and me on the last chunk of the land that my great-great grandparents homesteaded in the 1840's. Although my folks did not farm the land (my Dad worked for the car companies), we had big berry patches and vegetable gardens. Our yard was an apple orchard that my great-grandfather planted. Some of those trees are still standing at close to 120 years old. The varieties are Macintosh and Winter Bananas.

There were several working farms in the neighborhood where I grew up. Two were apple orchards. I hung out at one particular farm a lot, much to my mother's dismay. I would pick up windfalls for .25/bushel and became well on my way to financial freedom. I picked pumpkins, rode the tractor when I could, and was generally a pest to the farmer when he couldn't keep me busy. I loved it!

## Why did you start growing apples?

**Jane:** I bought the farm from my uncle and aunt, Hugh and Lenore Schram. They started the orchard. I had worked for seven years as a machinist. The day after my profit sharing matured I quit. It was my down payment on the farm. We came to this farm during my childhood and it held good memories from those times. I wanted independence and wanted to realize the direct results of my efforts.

## Talk about going organic- when and why?

**Jane:** As soon as I bought the farm in 1987 I went organic. It dawned on me when my uncle showed me his spray schedule and started talking about heavy

duty chemicals, that I didn't want to go in that direction. Thirteen years ago was the dawn of doing things differently - I did it by the seat of my pants.

Michigan State University was helpful with identifying pests and diseases, but Integrated Pest Management (IPM) was gutted at MSU for political reasons about two years before I started orcharding. They had good information and provided good support around the basic practices of growing apples. Scouting the orchard for pests and disease is one of the most important parts of farming organically. MSU didn't have an organic program, but they had good IPM information.

I had all these apples, now what? Pick and market. What woke me up was when I sold three semi loads of apples to Cascadian Farms for \$3 a bushel. They slapped their label on it and made lots of money. I thought that I could do that. I was already making apple cider but needed to add more value in order to make a living solely from the farm. I started looking for a processor to make apple butter for me and found one that could do it on a small scale, but I needed to find a processor to do bigger batches. I found one in Indiana but I had to hire an independent hauler to haul the apples 300 bushels at a time. I got tired of renting trucks and dealing with the trucker's schedule. Besides, I wanted to keep more of the money. So this year I bought a 24-foot truck to do the hauling and deliveries. Six hundred bushels are used for apple butter.

This year there was an outbreak of fire blight in southwest Michigan in the commercial apple orchards. Fire blight is a bacteria that kills back branches and blossoms of the apple trees. The main protection against fire blight for commercial growers is streptomycin and the fire blight had become resistant to it. Consequently the apple crop was ruined. Whole orchards were bulldozed and many farmers lost their orchards. Fire blight didn't affect my orchard and I believe it is because I use organic methods.

**Now shift to the farmers egg cooperative. When did it start? What is your**

## role? How is it effective in your area?

**Jane:** The egg coop started four years ago. In 1997 I got a \$20,000.00 innovative project Kellogg-funded grant from Integrated Food Farming Systems (IFFS) that was managed through Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS). I just knew it was going to work. I had been selling my cider through the winter to stores in southeast Michigan and was also selling eggs from the Amish community. In order to bring down my transportation costs, I needed more products to market. The Amish community couldn't meet the market demands so I organized the egg cooperative, Grazing Fields. I am currently the manager. The coop sells 3,000 dozen eggs a week and we are still not able to meet the demand. The coop's goal is to market only fresh eggs, we don't want to store them for longer than two weeks. Balancing the supply and demand is a hair-pulling task. For instance, the coop needed a good supply during Thanksgiving and Christmas and the growers just didn't have enough. Now the coop has a surplus. Timing is important. We have lost some good customers because the coop didn't have the supply. The farmers in the coop need to understand marketing better.

The coop bought an egg grader and washer with the grant money and set it up at my farm—AppleSchram Orchard—where I have a cooler that is used only part of the year. We meet every Monday to sort and grade.

## What struggles have you had as a woman farmer?

**Jane:** The struggle has been learning all the aspects of survival - growing, marketing and making a living totally off the farm. I was always able get my foot in to where I could get the information I needed. I never wanted to be a part of the "good old boy" agriculture.

## Do you see special needs for women farmers?

**Jane:** Women need encouragement. It is intimidating to go to farm meetings. But I really didn't want to be involved with mainstream agriculture. It is a no brainer.

**What is your experience with women farmers in Michigan and in the rest of the country?**

**Jane:** There hasn't been somebody out front saying let's get together here in Michigan, but there's a potential. I think there are lot of women who are fed up with the myths and the entrenched cultural stuff about agriculture and are looking for alternatives.

**Describe your relationship to Women, Food and Agriculture Network.**

**Jane:** It's a very happy one. When I met the Iowa women in D.C. it was very inspiring to get to know the group and feel the commitment. It has been an energizing force. Really supportive! The biggest thing is the support.

There hasn't been much support in the mainstream, and I have found support in WFAN.

**Where do you see yourself in the future?**

**Jane:** Probably down phasing. I feel myself in a transitional role and don't have a clear plan. I will definitely be in agriculture in some shape or form. The labor involved in this type of agriculture is hard to come by and the physical labor is hard on me. I want to be walking upright when I am 70 years old.

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## **RWZ Celebrates Fifth Year.**

Happy Birthday Rural Womyn Zone! It is now located at: <http://www.ruralwomyn.net/>. The Rural Womyn Zone is an expanding network of women living in rural areas across the United States and Canada. The barrier of geographical isolation is gone. Rural women from a wide variety of landscapes, cultures and experiences network around this virtual kitchen table and contribute to the web site in numerous ways.

**RWZ-Ruralwomyn Email List:** Our kitchen table.

**Ruralconnect Email List:** For rural domestic violence & sexual assault victim advocates.

**Ruralwomyn Chat Room:** Discussing everything from chickens to politics.

**EDUM Email List:** For rural women writers.

# **Does Gender Influence CSAs?**

*by Jessica Rochester, Grinnell College*

I recently completed a research project: The History of Women in Agriculture in the United States and how their Involvement in Community Supported Agriculture Impacts the Environment and their Communities. I used the WFAN Newsletter and the study by Betty Wells and Shelly Gradwell, "Gender and Resource Management: Community Supported Agriculture as Caring-practice" as some of my reference material.

In my paper, I explore the history of women in agriculture in America and the impact gender has on farming practices, in particular organic and sustainable farming such as CSAs. I concluded that gender does not have such a large influence on farming practices as the public would like to believe.

The social construction of gender portrays women as more caring than men and more focused on social interaction and small scale farming than men. This should mean that there are more CSA enterprises run by women. Although this is the case in Iowa, it is not true across the country, as observed from the website [www.csacenter.org](http://www.csacenter.org). Depending on the way in which a woman acquired her land and how long she has been farming it, her attitude might range from annoyance to a sense of loyalty and respect for the land. The number of acres also weighs in determining farming methods.

Organic farming and some other sustainable methods are frequently not feasible on farms of more than 50 acres. Then again, some men running 2,000 acre farms are trying to implement organic methods. The acreage often determines whether the land is called a farm or a garden. I found that the number of acres a person farms and the history of their connection to the land is more powerful than gender in determining how they farm.

I am presenting this information in hopes that it will broaden the picture presented by Wells and Gradwell in "Community Supported Agriculture: A Woman Friendly Enterprise." The article does a good job in documenting the rise in the number of CSAs and the sociological benefits of having a small community

supported enterprise and the environmental benefits of less harsh farming methods. I would like to use my findings to say that the social construction of gender confines the actions and feelings of both genders. The distinction frequently made between females and gardeners and males as farmers does not have to continue. I am worried by sections of the article such as "Others note the compatibility of raising food and raising children."

I do not doubt that women are active in the rise in numbers of CSAs in the country and especially in Iowa. However, in the rest of the United States, women do not yet run the majority of CSAs, nor do I believe they will or should. This is the idea the article seems to want the reader to take from the article. I would also like to point out the large number of CSA's in Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin that are jointly run by a man and a woman, presumably a husband and wife team.

I think it is worthwhile to further explore this partnership and the effects it has on the community and family. I believe that sustainable forms of agriculture, such as CSAs are beneficial to the environmental and social health of a town and that the more people involved in it in whatever form the better. Although we should acknowledge women's widespread involvement and importance regarding CSA's, I think that it is just as important to question the social construction of gender that seems to put men and women in these roles and try and get men to incorporate more sustainable practices into their farms.

I enjoy reading your publication and it has been very helpful in my research.

## **Wanted: Volunteer Treasurer**

WFAN is looking for a volunteer treasurer. This person receives income and bills coming to WFAN, authorizes and forwards them on to the Tides Center, keeps records of the flow, and reconciles data. Person needs to be OK with numbers and have a computer. Preferably lives in Iowa. Contact Katy Hansen at [kwhansen@ia.net](mailto:kwhansen@ia.net).

# WFAN Leads Project for Women

## Landowners in Cass County

by Betty Wells, Iowa State University Extension

WFAN has launched a pilot women landowners project in Cass County in southwest Iowa. This project was sparked by a USDA report that women comprise the largest group of agricultural landlords in the U.S. We are convinced that they are also under-served by agricultural institutions and under-represented in decision making bodies that shape natural resource policies and priorities. WFAN hopes to strengthen the participation of women landowners in land management decisions and thereby help to safeguard land as a natural resource and source of income. We will reach out to women landowners with education and technical assistance programs.

The project is supported by a grant from the Ben and Jerry's Foundation and assistance from our agency partners. WFANers involved in the project include Denise O'Brien, WFAN coordinator; Stacey Brown, WFAN Mission Intern; Betty Wells, WFAN facilitator (also representing Iowa State University), and Tanya Meyer, State Outreach Coordinator for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Iowa. Collaborators include Angi Hanson, Private Lands Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources; Sindra Jensen, Soil Conservationist, Cass County NRCS; Ed Siedel, District Conservationist, Cass County NRCS; Jeff Zimprich, Area Conservationist, Atlantic Area NRCS; and Jamie Newbury, Program Technician, Farm Service Agency, Cass County. These partners serve on a coordinating committee led by WFAN.

A women landowners advisory committee guides program direction. Members include Margaret Magill, Mary Schrier, Delma Harris, Jill Euken, Marjorie Sothman, Jackie Pelzer, Billie Wilson, Karen Cable Sudmann, Rebecca Clarken, Delaine Erickson, Nancy Erickson, Mary Pat Gregerson, Judy Kennedy and JoAnn Poepppe. This group met for the first time in December and will meet again in late February.

In the early stages of this project, we have been documenting patterns of land tenure, land management and decision making, developing a research methodology that can be replicated in other Iowa counties and other states, and taking an inventory of past programs for women landowners. We plan to begin collecting new data later this year. Our goal in later phases of the project will be to offer recommendations for stronger programs of outreach to women landowners and to work with selected women landowners to promote the community benefit of local agricultural ownership and perhaps match women landowners with aspiring women farmers.

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## Humanities Iowa Grant

WFAN has received a small grant from Humanities Iowa, "Gifts and Graces of the Land: Voices from Iowa Farm Women." The project will document new agricultural practices in Iowa. The stories of women and their families will be told with oral history narratives. A video will be developed integrating interviews, black and white images, personal documents and color video action. Fieldwork will begin in March, overlapping the Midwest Organics Conference.

Cynthia Vagnetti, photographer and WFAN member, will carry out the project. "I began my career in Black and White still photography and immediately realized the people I was documenting had a story to tell and their story informed my picture-making. Out of a deep respect to accuracy and authenticity I began tape-recording stories with pictures in mini slide shows. I now consider myself a visual storyteller dedicating my work to magnifying the voices of farm and ranch families across America."

## Coordinator's Corner

by Denise O'Brien

As the Coordinator I represent our Women, Food and Agriculture Network at meetings and gatherings where our voice needs to be heard. The winter schedule is exceptionally busy since it is the "slow" time of the year for farmers.

In January, Stacey, our Mission Intern, and I represented WFAN at "The Summit on the Future of Agricultural Education in Iowa," sponsored by the Governor's Council on Agricultural Education. (Our very own Laura Krouse was recently appointed to the Council.) Agriculture educators were introduced to new agricultural concepts to integrate into their curriculum. We were impressed with the representation of alternative agriculture folks. Hopefully the participants will go back to their schools with some new ideas.

The next day, we attended the Practical Farmers of Iowa's annual meeting. As always, Nan Bonfils did an excellent job of organizing the event. Governor Tom Vilsack gave the keynote address at the noon local foods luncheon.

WFAN organized a private meeting with the Governor to talk about issues concerning organic farmers such as genetically modified organisms. During this 45-minute meeting we told the Governor how organic farm operations are negatively impacted by GMOs. Stacey Brown, Kathleen Delate, Susan Zacharakis-Jutz, Laura Krouse and I spoke to the Governor about what he should be doing for small farmers and the organic industry.

Betty Wells, Stacey and I met with the Coordinating Committee of the Women Landowner's Project on January 19th. The Committee is putting into place the plan to begin the project (see article on Women Landowners to the right).

January 23rd found Stacey and me at the Iowa State Capitol at the monthly meeting of Rural Advocacy 2001. This group is composed of farm organizations, churches, social workers and health care providers who are concerned about state-level rural policy. Five members from the House of Representatives spoke on how rural issues were being dealt with this year in the Iowa Legislature. They report-

ed on the energy crunch, rural mental health, and farm legislation related to factory hog farms. Rural Advocacy 2001 meets monthly during the year to develop progressive policy for rural Iowa. Anyone interested in seeing this year's legislative agenda or coming to the Capitol to the meetings, please contact me.

Betty Wells, Danielle Wirth and I met with Leopold Center Director Fred Kirschenmann and Ag Economist Mike Duffy on January 24th to discuss WFAN's Women Landowner's Project and other activities.

The following Saturday I attended the annual Local Foods Conference in Iowa City. I conducted a workshop on policy, reported on legislative activities, and suggested what folks should do in response to action alerts.

On February 5th I was again at the legislature. Representative Mark Kuhn, D-Charles City, asked me convene a group of people to address legislation geared towards small farms. This is the first time in almost 20 years that I was asked to help create legislative language. I believe we are making progress in raising legislators consciousness, but we have a long way to go.

February 7th found Stacey and me at the Botanical Center in Des Moines for the Local Foods Task Force meeting. This task force, convened under the auspices of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, began meeting in January 1999 to promote local food production in Iowa. The taskforce is currently inviting other organizations to participate.

Whew! In between all of this activity, Stacey, Betty and I write grants for general support and for special projects such as our Women Landowners Project. We continually research and look for ways to support WFAN. This is tough work and we invite anyone who would like to help to volunteer!



# What One Woman Can Do

*(Everett, continued from page 1)*

of Everett's volunteer work centered around 4-H and the Farm Bureau. Through her writings and speeches she became known for emphasizing the importance of women's roles in agriculture. In one of her speeches she stated, 'A great proportion of farmer cooperatives are forgetting to use the talents of

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*"Why do we stay  
on the acres  
when periodically  
other opportunities  
come our way?  
Here's our list:  
We like freedom  
to set our own pace,  
freedom to choose  
our own method...  
we love the outdoors...  
we like the  
constant challenge...  
We like to work  
side by side with our  
growing-up children,  
then play together.  
Then we just like  
farm people.  
We call them  
kindred spirits."*

*"The Family Farm-The Farm Cooperative-  
And You," Okaboji, Sept. 1963*

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women' (May 22, 1963, Speeches, newspaper clippings and journal articles, 1960-1967). Also during this time she wrote a column entitled 'The Distaff Partner' where she talked about various farm issues."

From here the archives biography innumerate Beverly Everett's long involvement in 4-H, the American

Association of University Women (AAUW), UNESCO, the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, the United Methodist Church, the Overseas Development Council, the Church World Service, the International Federation of University Women, and the Iowa United Nations Association. She initiated the Rural Music History Celebration which celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Iowa rural production of the "Bohemian Girl."

The archives measure 10 linear feet and "give insight into Iowa farm life and various organizations dealing with farmers. They also show the workings of many local and national women's organizations, particularly AAUW."

"She was one of the best speakers I have ever heard and one of the keenest intellects I have ever known," says Betty Wells, Iowa State University Extension. "She was particularly adept at serving in the role of wrap-up speaker at the end of a conference, speaking extemporaneously, reflecting and synthesizing the highlights of what had transpired earlier."

She gave between 10 to 20 speeches a year. Titles of her speeches from the 1980s include: Every Farm is a Partnership; UNESCO and Women; Third World Women, Are Their Lives Improving; Peace and National Security; Peace: Your Obligation; Equality, Development, Peace: The Challenges for Women Remain; and The Rural Poor, the US and the Third World.

Everett received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Iowa Wesleyan College. In Oskaloosa she was named 1993 Woman of the Year and 1998 Citizen of the Year. An AAUW International Fellowship Endowment was named in her honor for support of women from developing countries in doctoral and post-doctoral study in the U.S.

Beverly Everett was inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame in 1983.

"She was also unassuming and accessible," says Wells. "She referred to herself as a professional volunteer."

# Women, Food & Agriculture Network

A Tides Center Project  
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*Women, Food, & Agriculture Network* links and amplifies women's voices on issues of food systems, sustainable communities and environmental integrity.

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