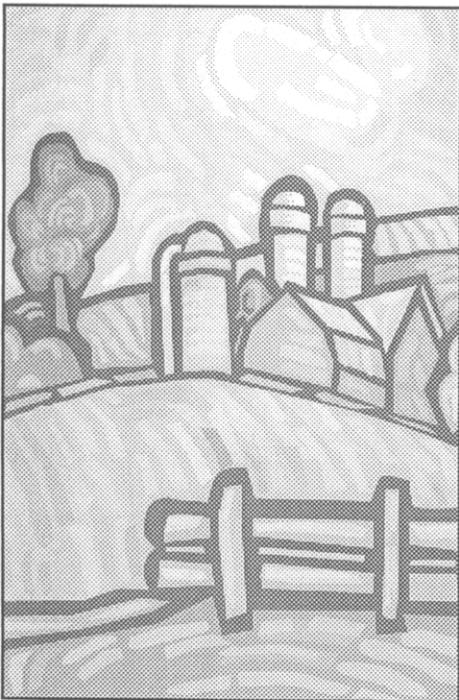


Women, Food & Agriculture Network

Advice on Buying Your Very Own Farm



by Jody Padgham, Wisconsin Women's Sustainable Farming Network (WWSFN)

I'm certainly not an expert on purchasing land and, as I write this, don't even own a farm. But I am smack in the middle of the stressful process with an accepted offer on a 60-acre dairy farm in northwest Wisconsin. I'd like to tell you a bit about what I have learned so far.

First, a little background. Born a city girl, I always knew I wanted to farm, just wasn't sure how to make it happen. Now, single and 45 years into life, I have hatched a plan, a bit complex and worthy of some eyebrow raising, but well thought out and tailored to my strengths. Though deeply committed to community, I will be purchasing the farm by myself, eventually hoping for partners so that I can get into sheep dairy and possibly a vegetable operation.

Of course there is a long convoluted story about how I have gotten to where I am, but we'd need a cozy fire and comfortable couch to get all the way through the tale. You will just have to believe me when I tell you that it has been a continuous cycle of ups and downs, stress and joys for a number of years now. Through it all, there seem to be a series of strong threads.

● **Define what you really want. This**

can take a long time and needs to be looked at from many directions. As a non-farmer, one of the most important questions for me to answer was 'what kind of farmer do I want to be?' I interned, visited and volunteered on farms and attended hundreds of workshops, questioning everyone I met. I narrowed in on sheep dairy, which then put in place several other pieces, such as where (within the range of the co-op), size (big enough to graze 100 animals), infrastructure needed (barns and dairy equipment), soils and climate (good for pasture).

● **Carefully plan the financial piece: where the initial money is coming from, how you will pay the mortgage, what kind of debt is comfortable, how much you will work off farm, and where you will sell what you produce?**

The answers to these questions will indicate other things: location (close to a particular urban center for job or market, etc.), affordable size of farm, area of state (cheap acreage further from markets, or higher closer in...). Don't plan on any grants to fund your plan (none available for farmland purchase that I know of, though there are some to help with improvements). Look into 'new farmer' low interest loan packages from your

Mission

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

(Farm, continued on page 7)



Calendar

January 12, 2002: Forming a Local Food Circle in Henry County. 1:30 pm at the Clinton Library, Clinton, MO. For more information: Ruth Anne Parrott via email: ParrottR@missouri.edu or tel.: 660-563-2718.

January 18-19, 2002: Practical Farmers of Iowa Annual Meeting. Ames. Gateway Center, Ames (see article at right).

January 24-26, 2002: Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Annual Meeting. Marshalltown, Iowa. For more information contact Deb Smith, tel.: 515-465-5992.

January 25-26, 2002: 7th Annual Iowa Local Food System Conference. Center for Energy and Environmental Education, Cedar Falls, IA (see story to right).

February 16, 2002: Missouri Organic Association/Sustaining People through Agriculture Network Annual Conference. George Washington Carver Research Farm, Jefferson City, MO. For more information, contact: John Delly, email: jdelly1@email.msn.com; Ardie Compton, email: spanpres@hotmail.com; or Mary Hendrickson, email: hendricksonm@missouri.edu.

March 30, 2002: Kansas City Foods Day sponsored by the Kansas City Food Circle. Barstow School, Overland Park. Contact: Mary Hendrickson, email: hendricksonm@missouri.edu; or Craig Volland, email: hartwood2@mindspring.com.

April 25-28, 2002: United Methodist Women's Assembly. Philadelphia, PA. The theme of the Assembly is "Sing a New Song." Registration \$125. For more information, contact Assembly Business Office, 7820 Reading Road, Caller 1800, Cincinnati, OH 45222. Tel.: 513-821-5896, email: tcameron@fuse.net

Events

7th Annual Iowa Local Food System Conference

Date: Friday, Jan. 25, 2-6 p.m. and Saturday 26, 9-5 p.m., 2002.

Location: Friday - Center for Energy and Environmental Education, Cedar

Falls (not fully confirmed yet); Saturday - St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Cedar Falls (confirmed).

Friday: Farmer-to-Farmer Workshop - geared for experienced producers, open to all. Join an afternoon of in-depth, focused discussions on issues of interest to the experienced producers.

Saturday: Main Conference - Come for a day of exploration into Iowa's community-based agriculture. Voices from all aspects of this new agriculture will shine light on emerging developments. We will celebrate the good hard work that has gotten us to this point and explore what directions we need to focus our sights on.

Brochures coming out in December.

For more information, contact Jan Libbey, Conference Coordinator, email: libland@frontiernet.net or 641/495-6367

Practical Farmers Workshops

The Practical Farmers of Iowa Annual Meeting and Winter Workshops will take place at the Gateway Center in Ames (previously Gateway Holiday Inn) on January 18th and 19th, 2002. Saturday's program will feature a keynote presentation by Mark Ritchie, President of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, over a dozen concurrent workshops, and an Iowa Bounty buffet lunch. Childcare is available on Saturday.

New this year will be in-depth workshops Friday afternoon cosponsored by ISU Extension and the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, plus our usual family social gathering Friday evening. For additional information contact: Jody Larson at 515-733-2411 or email: jodylarson@yahoo.com.

News Briefs

Internships

With the support of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, WFAN will support pairs of interns/host farmers with summer stipends ranging from \$500-\$800. This is a continuation of the internship program begun in 2001 with the support of the Ben and Jerry's Foundation. Preference will be given to WFAN members who can identify their own placement. Additional details will be available in mid-January. For more

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:

March issue: February 15

June issue: May 15

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New International Treaty Calls for Public Access to Seeds

The "International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture" was adopted by the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) on November 3, 2001. The vote was 116-0 with two abstentions - the United States and Japan.

The treaty establishes a multilateral system providing access to seeds and germplasm for much of the world's food supply, as well as fair and equitable sharing of the benefits. It also includes a provision on farmers' rights to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed.

Upon the conclusion of the negotiations, U.S. negotiators indicated the U.S. Senate was unlikely to ratify the new treaty, which will enter into force 90 days after 40 nations approve it under their domestic legal systems.

The most contentious provision states that farmers, researchers and others using the system "shall not claim any intellectual property or other rights that limit the facilitated access to the plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, or their genetic parts or components, in the form received from the Multilateral System."

Ultimately, conflicts over attempts to patent seeds or genes received through the multilateral system may end up in the dispute settlement system of either the WTO or the genetic resources treaty or both. Under the new treaty, disputes that cannot be settled through negotiation, mediation or arbitration may be referred to the International Court of Justice.

For more information contact: Kristin Dawkins at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, tel.: 612-870-3410, email: kdawkins@iatp.org.

Nonprofit Project for Rural Women

An online network of rural women in the United States and Canada has created a new nonprofit project that will provide

Winter Gathering Brings Three States

by Denise O'Brien

Spending a weekend high on a hill in the woods of Minnesota during an usually warm fall in the company of women has to be one of my the highlights of the year.

The 2nd Annual Tri-State Fall Harvest Women's Gathering at the Good Earth Village outside of Spring Valley, Minnesota was once again the gathering place for 50 women. It was wonderful to see the faces of women I had met for the first time a year ago and, of course, to meet new people. Being a hugger, my favorite time is greeting one another with bear hugs, knowing we have a year of work, play, happiness and sorrow behind us.

The workshops were terrific! Gail Specht provided women with information on the ins and outs of tractors—buying a used one, tips on upkeep, and problem solving skills to know why your tractor is doing something out of the ordinary.

Laura Krouse did her laboratory magic and put women to work isolating DNA in order to better understand the mysteries of genetically modified organisms.

Thinking of buying a farm? Jody Padgham, a third generation urbanite, knew she was destined to farm and set out to purchase one (see story page 1). She told a story woven with humor and good practical advice. Jody will be milking sheep on her farm in the northern woods of Wisconsin in the near future.

Neva Hassanein gave a wonderful keynote about food democracy. She is an assistant professor of Environmental Studies at the University of Montana and has authored a book "Changing the Way America Farms: Knowledge and Community in the Sustainable Agriculture Movement (University of Nebraska Press, 1999). She inspired and



challenged the women about the future of agriculture in the United States.

The highlight of the weekend was standing around the huge bonfire in camaraderie with women from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa—talking, laughing and just being together. I looked up and saw the northern lights filtering across the darkened sky. We all stood there in awe at Mother Nature's beauty.

Thank you Stacey Brown, Linda Nash, Solveig Hanson, JoAnn Pipkorn and Mary Doerr. You all did a fantastic job!

(Denise O'Brien is Coordinator of the Women, Food and Agriculture Network.)

news and information for rural women by rural women.

First Chance was developed by The Rural Womyn Zone, a grassroots international network of rural women, utilizing Internet technology to provide information, outreach, support and a networking base for rural women and their nonprofit organizations, entrepreneurial efforts and local grass roots activities. By providing a virtual village where women can meet,

Rural Womyn Zone enhances women's opportunities to choose to live in rural areas and to participate in activities that create and sustain environments and lifestyles that nourish rural women and girls. See: www.ruralwomyn.net/firstchance.html.

For more information, contact: Lynda Harper, Project Partner, First Chance Project, c/o Rural Womyn Zone, P O Box 144, Yuma CO 80759; 970-848-2519.

Front-Line Feminism in a Canadian Village

by Jo Leath, Nova Scotia, Canada

In these days when corporations and governments have adopted the vocabulary "Global Village," the reality in the industrialized West is that few people in fact live in villages, or can recall what village life is like. Yet 22.2% of the Canadian population lives in towns numbering fewer than 10,000 inhabitants.

Melvorn Square, on the south side of North Mountain in Annapolis County Nova Scotia is a village. A real village! According to Canada Post, there are almost 200 homes. That is more than the traditional number of Melvorn Square residences; Canada Post includes a newly built subdivision that is not in fact a part of the original "Square."

It Is Still Possible to Hold a Village Tea

In Melvorn Square it is still possible to hold a Village Tea, and indeed teas are held several times a year, marking the seasons and the major festivals: Mothers' Day and Christmas. The truism holds: if you build it they will come, and if tea is poured, community members are soon attending to partake! A villager is free to ask for and receive the keys to the Community Hall, that which was the school house until the early 1970s, and to call around and arrange for the donation of cookies, cakes, or sandwiches, according to the requirements of the event.

The Women Contacted to Bake for a World Rural Women's Day Tea

At first, the women contacted to bake for a World Rural Women's Day Tea were confused. Although the Canadian Federation of Agriculture says that just over 25% of farm operators in Canada in 1996 were women, and UN statistics show that women perform 30% of the agricultural work in industrialized countries, the women who live on the farms around Melvorn Square do not see themselves as people who might be granted a 'day' by the United Nations. Willing to be involved, they appeared non-plussed by the theme. Baffled courtesy greeted

me; I was granted permission to celebrate the women I was talking about. "Rural women," they repeated, "Well, it's not really as if they "do" anything." They left, shaking their heads.

When the Day of the Tea Dawned

When the day of the tea dawned, it was in fact the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, two days after the World Rural Women's Day. A windswept

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rainy morning in Melvorn, a day when many drivers remain parked. Nonetheless, tea tables were set, and people arrived, mostly women, all of them curious about the unusual title of the happening. The three speakers held them all spellbound.

Janice Lawrence of Bridgetown Spoke About Her Role as a Farmer

Janice Lawrence of Bridgetown spoke about her role as a farmer, farm worker, farm wife, farm mother, agricultural activist and community builder. She compared the contribution of rural women to threads in a quilt: present in every inch of the greater community, and strong enough to hold it all together.

Next Was Jean Ward of Lawrencetown

Next was Jean Ward of Lawrencetown. Jean listed her dozens of jobs as a dairy farmer, family member and board-member of rural and agricultural organizations, working on national, regional and local levels. Her presentation included statistics about the economic impact of farming in Annapolis County, and a celebration of the success of rural mothers. In this county, they have created a lifestyle that appeals to young people, who are choosing to stay on or return to the land, resulting in the lowest average farmer age in the province.

The final speaker was Linda Tupper, owner-operator of Babies Unlimited, the hog farm in Morrystown, Kings County. Linda has the largest agricultural loan ever granted to a woman in Nova Scotia. She talked about her life as farmer, mother and employer and about the demands of recent environmental regulations on her business. She spoke too of her success as she prepares to pass the work to younger farmers during the next decade while she adjusts her focus to public education around agriculture and food safety issues.

Those in Attendance Asked Questions and Talked and Socialized

Those in attendance asked questions and talked and socialized with the speakers for an additional hour, clearly enjoying each others' company. During the clean-up phase, the kitchen buzzed with laughter from the dishwashers and discussion of the learning that had happened. "It makes you feel more connected," was a phrase heard from several directions. "I guess maybe I'm not the only one doing what I'm doing." "Well you know," said one farm woman, known to all as a dynamo of activity, "It just made me feel real good about being a woman, and you don't often get to feel like that!"

Made me feel pretty good too.

Going Local and Beyond

by Linda Nash

Because I have long been involved in all kinds of local foods and food democracy issues, as well as owning an organic vegetable farm, what I eat and where I buy it has always been a big deal to me. My goal is to grow as much of our own food as possible, using canning and freezing to get us through the winter. Since we raise over 70 different crops, this works out pretty well for a big portion of our daily bread. However, when I walk into a store to buy things we don't grow, or aren't available over the winter, I have a long list of qualifications I hope to meet for the products which go home with me.

First on the list

Certified organic only. I don't want pesticides, hormones, herbicides, miscellaneous preservatives or chemical additives. I want to know the product was sustainably grown, and processed in a chemical-free environment.

Second on the list

I want to know about the company. I look for small, family owned and operated operations, and try to find out how the place is run. Big international conglomerates have swallowed up many of the organic companies we used to patronize, and we want to continue to support the little guys when we can.

Third on the list

I want the fewest ingredients, the least processing, and the least packaging available. I figure this all saves a lot of wear and tear on the environment, and in general, the less processing, the more nutrition.

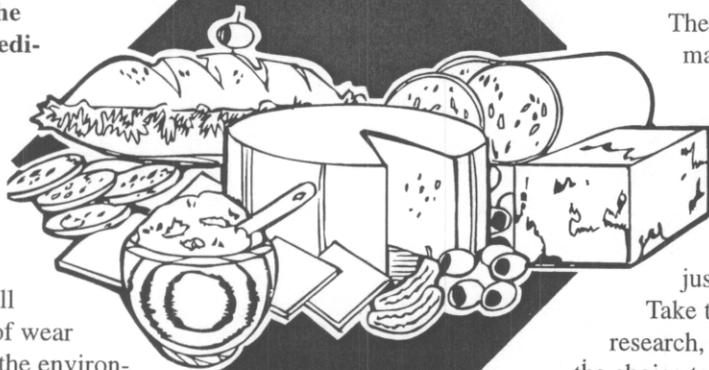
After adding up all these require-

ments, and looking over what's available on the store shelves, here are a few companies who meet these qualifications with flying colors and have earned a place on our pantry shelves:

- **Bob's Red Mill Flour:** certified organic flours that are stone-ground by Bob at his Red Mill - enough said! Milwaukie, Oregon
- **Pacific Foods Soymilks:** a small operation in southern Oregon, with on-farm processing of certified organic soybeans. Family-owned, and packaging available in 64 oz containers, unusual for soymilk products. Tualatin, Oregon
- **Eden Foods:** produces certified organic canned tomatoes and beans, among other things, and still family owned in Michigan. Strong commitment to organics; they are one of the original organic foods companies, but one of few who have not sold out.
- **Yogi Tea:** family owned, producing certified organic herb teas in incredible flavors, along with other products in their Golden Temple line of organic cereals. Eugene, Oregon.

And our favorite:

- **San-J:** certified organic shoyu and tamari products. When I asked them who owns the company, it turns out it has been owned by the same Japanese family for the last 700 years or so - whew!



There are many excellent companies out there, of which these are just a few.

Take the time to research, and make the choice to support organic family owned operations. They need us, and we need them!

Food & Society Program

by Denise O'Brien, Coordinator of Women, Food and Agriculture Network

The first assignment was to participate in the New Developments in a study tour of community-based sustainable agriculture in Europe. LaVon Griffieon and I were awarded fellowships in the W.K. Kellogg Foundation inaugural Food and Society Fellows Program. Twelve from around the United States were chosen to participate from 2001-2003.

The objective of the study tour was to give us a comprehensive understanding of the new approaches to marketing sustainable agriculture emerging in Europe. We studied the development of standards for sustainable farming and effective, creative mechanisms for rewarding farmers who meet the new standards.

We met in Bergen, Holland. During our two-day visit we met with NGOs (non-governmental organizations), governmental officials, and farmers to hear what policies were being implemented to enhance sustainable agriculture. Besides listening to lectures on history and current policy, we took field trips to farms and environmental organizations.

The twelve fellows come from different parts of the United States and from a variety of non-profit organizations, public organizations and universities. We ranged from nutritionists to farmers, from executive directors to entomologists. Eight of the fellows are women.

We learned that good food policy is elusive. It falls victim to the changing political power plays. We are now witnessing the process with the current Farm Bill legislation in our own country. Much to my dismay, major transnational corporations have a firm hold on policy worldwide, leaving crumbs for small farm/environmental groups.

I bring back with me the commitment to work harder on local food systems. Over the past 20 years I have been privileged to travel to many countries to visit with farmers and government officials. I always return home committed as ever. The adage to think globally but act locally resonates profoundly to me as a farmer and community organizer.

What Makes for Low Quality of Iowa's Water

by Danielle Wirth

Iowa's surface and ground water is suffering from many years of abuse and neglect. Since these conditions did not occur overnight, the solutions are going to take time to materialize. In the article in the last issue, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources IOWATER program was highlighted. IOWATER is the volunteer water quality-monitoring program that has trained and equipped several hundred volunteers to measure the health of Iowa's surface water.

Water is considered contaminated if materials or conditions in the water make it unsuitable for a particular use. Contamination may be biological, chemical and physical.

Among the most controversial tests to perform, are those that measure chemical composition of the water. Determining the level of nitrates and phosphorous in surface waters indicates that several impacts might be contributing to the situation. The challenge and frustration in measuring these chemical constituents lies in the fact that many of them are from "non-point" sources. A non-point source is pervasive - an impact felt throughout the whole watershed.

For example, the application of anhydrous ammonia on corn ground in Iowa is a practice widely used on many farms throughout a watershed. The problem with this type of application is that the plant growth stimulants tend to mix with rainfall and runoff into receiving streams. The loss of these nutrients on the farm ground is costly to the farmer, but also has a cost to the entire landscape. This process of nutrient enrichment is often referred to as "cultural eutrophication." "Cultural" because humans are involved and "eutrophic" meaning nutrient-enriched.

Nutrient-enriched water has potentially grave consequences because of the responses of certain aquatic plants to the excess nutrients. Nutrient-enrichment in water is a state of ill health. Some vari-

eties of algae are encouraged by the excess nutrients like nitrates and phosphates. The algae and other small plants that are stimulated to grow, tend to have very short life cycles. Their rapid growth quickly covers the surface of ponds, lakes, streams and rivers. Surface plants prevent sunlight from entering the water. Submergent, perennial plants can no longer continue photosynthesis. Photosynthesis is a process that combines sunlight, carbon dioxide and water to produce sugars and starches that nourish the plant. A byproduct of photosyn-



thesis is oxygen. So, overgrowth of surface plants reduces the sunlight infiltration, thus compromising perennial plant growth and the production of oxygen that the water system needs.

The other insult has to do with the lifecycle of some of the algae. They only live a few days or less and when they complete their lifecycle and die, a host of micro-recyclers go to work to break down the complex organic matter into simple, inorganic components. This is accomplished through aerobic respiration, a process that requires lots of oxygen. As the rich algae bloom is being decomposed by the recyclers, huge amounts of oxygen are literally sucked out of the water. In turn, massive kills of fish, insects and amphibians is possible. This is what occurs in the Gulf of Mexico as nutrient rich water stimulated by midwestern agriculture flows down-

stream into the state of Louisiana where it empties into the Gulf of Mexico. The "Dead Zone" in some years is almost as big as Texas. Fish that can move quickly might be able to avoid the oxygen "sag." Organisms that are slow or rooted to the site, like clams, mussels, and oysters, will die when oxygen levels drop.

Nitrate and phosphate levels in surface waters are very easy to measure now with tests that are relatively inexpensive. What these tests reveal is that nutrients are entering the receiving stream and this indicates impact from somewhere within the watershed. The origin of the chemicals could be row crop agriculture, a faulty septic system, a manure lagoon failure that leaked into a creek or river, or even a malfunction at a municipal water reclamation facility.

The good news is that Iowans are taking responsibility for the situation. Knowing the levels of these chemicals in the water is the first step to taking corrective action.

The Raccoon River Greenbelt Project is a cooperative venture between many partners. Among the partners are the Iowa Environmental Council, local

farmer/citizen monitors, the Polk County Conservation Board, the Iowa Farm Bureau, the Iowa Corn Growers Association, and the Iowa Sierra Club, to name only a few. The Des Moines Water Works through the efforts of chemist Gordon Brandt is handling the massive data collection work.

Participants in the program submit data several times during the year, and the Water Works runs the lab work and maintains the database. Here is an example where concerned people, from public and private sectors paid attention to the WATERSHED and were able to overcome political boundaries to accomplish a goal.

(Do you have a question on water quality? Danielle Wirth invites readers to submit questions. Selected questions will be answered in future issues of the newsletter. Submit to ehorizon@netins.net.)

Advice on Buying a Farm

(Farm, continued from page 1)

state agriculture office. Check out farm-link programs that hook up new farmers with the seasoned elders wanting to pass their farms on. I am lucky in that I have a house with a lot of equity to sell in the city and a good job so that the bank is happy to plan a mortgage (even though I will eventually quit to move the 3.5 hours to the farm...).

● **Ask so many questions that you know everyone should be getting tired of you.** Ask about the neighbors, ask about the hardware store, the farm pesticide history, talk to the extension agent, find out about the zoning and anything else you can think of. If you don't like certain answers, ask someone else to be sure. I went into one financial institution, and they told me a 30 year fixed rate mortgage would be 8.5% interest. Down the street at the Credit Union I found a loan for 6.8% the same day. If I hadn't followed my instincts, it could have been a \$200/month mistake. As a single woman, I have to say that I find other women to be the best source to learn information, so I always make a beeline for the women loan officers or office clerks.

● **Never underestimate the power of community.** Take advantage of the community you have, and try to figure out if the community you are moving toward will be satisfying for you. Don't underestimate how willing people are to help, if you only get over the shyness of asking. Buying alone, I called up five WWSFN members in the area to ask if they would come be my 'critique team'. Everyone was happy to say yes, and we spent parts of two days combing the farm. Let me tell you, these women were tough. They asked every hard question I was too shy or distracted to ask: What do you think about the bulge in this building? Which tractor is in the best shape? Why is that sheet metal piece up on the barn? After our visits, they sat with me and candidly assessed what we saw. I can't express how invaluable their involvement was. Now, the phone calls of interest and support continue, with promises of work trades in the future. I chose this farm for

several reasons, but proximity to several WWSFN members, as well as members of the WI Sheep Dairy Co-op, another great support group, are key parts of the decision.

● **Find your assertive self, and be honest about what you want and need.** In negotiating price, especially, you need to stand firm and let the owner know why you want what you want. Don't be shielded into things you don't want. Let the seller know you are a force to be reckoned with but will be fair in negotiations. My farmer and I were a long ways apart in our prices, till I wrote him a "Dear John" letter that laid out all my needs and the reasoning behind it. He accepted my offer within a few hours of receipt.

You will be overwhelmed by the number of decisions involved in buying a farm, and the short timelines in which you are expected to make choices that have huge impact on your life. To smooth the way, I can suggest what I have learned from my experience: know what you want, plan the financial piece well, never underestimate your people resources, and always be questioning and strong. Good luck, and come visit!

(Jody Padgham is Outreach Specialist for the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, Madison, Wisconsin; tel.: 608-262-0705; email: padgham@aae.wisc.edu; website: www.wisc.edu/uwcc. She also works with Wisconsin Women's Sustainable Farming Network. Jody presented these ideas at a workshop at the Tri-State Fall Harvest Women's Gathering, see story page 3.)

Voices from Midwest Farm Women

WFAN is recipient of funding from the Cavalier Foundation for the tri-state Voices from Midwest Farm Women project under the direction of photojournalist, Cynthia Vagnetti. Cynthia received seed money from Humanities Iowa and Minnesota Humanities and is working on a deadline with Wisconsin Humanities. Once the last Humanities funding is on board, we will move the project forward...early Spring 2002!

Coordinator's Corner

by Denise O'Brien, Coordinator of the Women, Food and Agriculture Network

Given the events of September 11, there is much to reflect upon as I sit to write for this last issue of 2001. We have all been affected in some way or another. For the majority, there was no direct and immediate impact, but the long term will bring changes in our lives. Many of the changes will be self-induced, but many will be legislated and take years to understand how they affect our lives.

All of us should take the time to sit down and write our thoughts about what has happened and how the country is retaliating. Our grandchildren will certainly be reading about what happened in their his/herstory books. I feel strongly that future generations need to know how their relatives thought in the days following those tragic events.

The women in Afghanistan have had some rights restored. But we must view this with caution not knowing what will happen under new rulers. Many of us have read and tried to understand the treatment of women. It is hard for me to understand how in the 21st century conditions of women can be so dismal.

Coming from the food and agriculture perspective, we understand how industrial agriculture is held together by a very, very thin thread. I have attended several meetings and heard and read a number of commentaries on agri/bio terrorism. The work that we are all doing towards a more just and sane food system is more important than ever. Food safety and purity will become a key issue in the debates around safe food. Local food systems, direct marketing of products and community supported agriculture are the means by which people can feel safe about what they eat.

As we end this eventful year and look to the next, I wish peace and tranquility for the future. My wish for the coming years is that more people will become involved in our democracy and that there will be less violence in our world. I also wish that there will be an awakening to the fragility of mother earth and an acute awareness that we must work together across the globe for justice.

**Women, Food
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