

Women, Food & Agriculture Network

Land, Community and Environment: Strengthening Women's Choices

by Betty Wells

Demographic and economic trends in agriculture, such as declining numbers of owner-operated farms and aging farmers and farmland owners, do not bode well for environmental and community futures. The shape of future agriculture and food systems will change as land and farm assets change hands. This shift in the historical relationship between farming and land ownership changes the face of who bears the risks of farming, who makes production and investment decisions, who protects the environment, and who supports the community. Non-operators, many of whom are absentee, are exercising increasing influence on investment, conservation, production, and marketing decisions.

Many of these non-operators are women. Women own and lease substantial proportions of U.S. farmland. Relative to men, women landowners tend to be older and to depend more on land rental income. They are more likely to inherit their land and less likely to operate the farm themselves. Women are less

likely to make management decisions, either alone or jointly with the tenant (Effland, Rogers & Grim 1993). Women are also more likely to reside in off-farm urban areas (Rogers & Vandeman 1993). Women tend to have less experience in farm operations and therefore have greater need for technical assistance and education on sustainable agricultural practices and processes, farm programs, and the economics of farm operation whether they choose to farm or rent the land. They may need information on estate planning and leasing, especially multi-year leasing and leasing options that are more conducive to sustainable agriculture.

WFAN has initiated a pilot women landowners project in Cass County, Iowa. Our goals are to increase access by women landowners to networks of support, information, and technical assistance; to increase their participation in sustainable production practices; and to encourage the adoption of more sustainable resource management practices. Our participatory approach involves an

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

April 4, 2002: Local Foods on University Campus. Ames, Iowa. Nadeem Siddiqui, director of the award-winning Cornell University Dining Services in Ithaca, N.Y., will share his recipe for culinary success, "From Farm to Fork: A Forum on Locally Grown Foods at University Campuses." An informal discussion will be held from 9:30 to 11 a.m. with Mr. Siddiqui speaking from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. For more information, contact Rich Pirog, 515-294-1854 or email: rpirog@iastate.edu.

April 5, 2002. Waterkeeper Alliance 2002 Summit for Sustainable Hog Farming. Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake, Iowa. 8:00 a.m. \$25.00 includes all programs and meals. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s address at 7:00 p.m. free and open to the public. More information is available from Waterkeeper Alliance attorneys Nicolette Hahn or Jeff Odefey at 914-422-4410 and at www.waterkeeper.org.

April 12, 2002. Global Warming and Iowa's Energy Future. Grinnell, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sponsored by Ecumenical Ministries of Iowa, the Luce Program in Nations and the Global Environment, Grinnell College, and the Iowa Environmental Council. Focus is on energy production, business, agriculture, and environmental issues. Bill McKibben, author of *End of Nature*, and Bentham Paulos, of the Energy Foundation, are the featured speakers. Contact Benjamin Webb, email: benjaminwebb@cfu.net or 319-277-8520.

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

May 11, 2002: Iowa Shares Homefest. Hotel Fort Des Moines, Des Moines. \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. Artists: Greg

Brown, David Zollo, Kevin Gordon, Fat Tuesday and the Grease Fire Horns. Iowa Shares is a statewide coalition of social action nonprofit organizations raising funds through workplace giving. Women, Food and Agriculture Network is a part of Iowa Shares.

Opportunities

Internships

With the support of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, WFAN is supporting pairs of women 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. Applications are due April 5. For more information or an application form, please contact Betty Wells, email: bwells@iastate.edu, tel.: 515-294-1104.

Iowa Lakeside Lab Internships

Deadline: April 1. Three full-time, paid positions are available in the areas of Restoration Ecology/Vegetation Management, Journalism/Public Relations, and Water Quality Monitoring. Contact Dr. Arnold van der Valk at 515.294.2488 or email: lakeside@iastate.edu.

Energy Grant

The Iowa Energy Center is seeking Conference and Small Demonstration Projects proposals for the current calendar year. The Center supports efforts in energy efficiency and renewable energy. The full solicitation can be found at <http://energy.iastate.edu/about/grant-loan/grants/wkshop.htm>. For more information contact the Iowa Energy Center at 515-294-8819 or email: iec@energy.iastate.edu.

Yards for Kids

(From Donna Bauer, bauer@metc.net)

With the spraying season upon us, our food buying club has decided to start a quiet revolution by putting up "No Lawn Pesticides Used Here" signs. Check out Dr. Kamyar Enshayan's website: <http://www.uni.edu/yardsforkids>.

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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Grant Opportunities

USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) is looking to partner with Grower Groups, along with other agencies, to provide activities for non-traditional producers in the areas of marketing, production, financial, legal, and human resources. USDA-RMA is now focusing on "specialty crops" and "under served commodities."

Specialty crops include vegetables, fruits, nut trees, floriculture, ornamental nursery, Christmas trees, turfgrass, sod, aquaculture, industrial crops, syrups and honeys, roots and herbs, grazing, hay and forage, and "highly specialized" varieties of traditional crops. Under served commodities include poultry and poultry products, dairy, timber, wool and mohair, and all organically certified crops.

Funding is available for outreach meetings, workshops, seminars, and conferences, honorariums and travel costs for speakers and presenters, audiovisual expenses, printing costs, and local outreach projects.

This is a great opportunity for WFAN and grower groups around the country. For further information and Request For Proposal (RFP), contact Laurie Fredricks at 651-290-3304 Ext. 242, email: laurie.fredricks@rm.usda.gov; or Cynthia Cruea at 651-290-3304 Ext. 226, email: or cynthia.cruea@rm.usda.gov. In Iowa, contact Tanya Meyer, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and a WFAN member, at 319-668-8110, email: tanya.meyer@ia.usda.gov.

News Briefs

Farm Bill Update

(taken from the Update of the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, dedicated to educating the public on the importance of a sustainable food and agriculture system that is economically viable, environmentally sound, socially just, and humane.)

Now the next battle in the Farm Bill debate has begun. And because we have won so much there is also much to lose.

The Senate just passed their version of the Farm Bill in a vote of 58-40. Selected leaders from the House and Senate will

now meet in a Conference Committee to reconcile the considerable differences between the House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill. These negotiations are done behind closed doors, but will result in the Farm Bill that is ultimately voted upon in both houses of Congress.

We will soon begin issuing alerts to fight for EVERYTHING we have won.

- The Conservation Security Program that rewards all types of farmers and ranchers throughout the nation for their good stewardship of working land.
 - Reasonable limitations on payments to any single farmer or rancher.
 - Prohibition against packer ownership of livestock.
 - Important value-added marketing and rural microenterprise development programs for family farmers and ranchers and rural communities.
 - A new beginning farmer and rancher program.
 - Protections for farmers and ranchers against the use of abusive contracts by big industry.
 - The establishment of an Undersecretary for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
 - Choice for farmers and ranchers as to how they resolve disputes with big industry.
 - Increased funding for Community Food Projects in the House bill.
 - Improvements in program equity for minority and socially disadvantaged farmers in the House bill.
 - Mandatory country of origin labeling for all meat, fruits and vegetables.
 - Assurance that taxpayer support for livestock operations through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program is targeted to cost-effective environmental benefits on independent farms and ranches.
- To be sure, there remains serious problems with the Farm Bill. The commodity title is bad in both the House and Senate bill. Much more needs to be done in the area of equitable program delivery and performance for limited resource and socially disadvantaged farmers. Both bills are still skewed towards the interests of big industry. There are many, many

problems with the Farm Bill, but...

We should be PROUD of our accomplishments listed above. These are the bright spots in the Farm Bill, and each and every one of them are worth fighting for.

World Summit on Sustainable Development

In late August of this year the world will gather at another of the United Nations' major conferences to discuss issues of global concern. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, August 26 to September 4. It comes ten years after the Earth Summit which started discussion on global warming, biodiversity, alternative energy and energy conservation. There has been much talk over those ten years, but not a lot of consensus on what should be done. The issues of the practical changes needed to solve problems will be the focus of this upcoming World Summit.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been a critical part of the discussions over the years. They have added such issues as globalization and poverty to the long list of concerns over sustainable development.

The Iowa United Nations Association is an accredited organization for attending the NGO Forum, the side meetings for NGOs. They are presently making plans for travel and accommodation. Anyone interested in attending as an Iowa UNA delegate, contact Katy Hansen at the Iowa UNA, 319-337-7290, unaiaowa@inav.net.

Stories to Tell?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils are preparing a collection of stories about sustainable agriculture and community initiatives in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. What is being done to meet our needs now and in the future? How? What has worked, what has helped, what has failed, and why?

To submit stories, go to <http://www.redsuccess.com/> and submit your stories on the interactive website designed to receive your story.

A Survey of the WFAN Email Listserv

by Diane Phillips

The WFAN listserv is a forum for discussion and information sharing among members who support the mission of WFAN and others. If you subscribed to the list during December 2001 or January 2002 you were invited to respond to the survey, and 41% of you did. Some of the questions asked about the use and value of the listserv, the importance of such a forum for women, and the information that subscribers had access to through the network. Many of you sent back not only praise but also suggestions that could make the list more effective.

The advisory board of WFAN and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Iowa State University gave permission for the survey. Individual survey questionnaires were emailed to each subscriber to safeguard confidentiality; use of the "reply" key returned the result directly to me. All data are being kept confidential.

Useful and Valuable

Although a few respondents indicated that the listserv was only marginally useful or of medium value to them, most of the replies noted that it is very useful and valuable. One person commented, "I appreciate the sense of community I gain from being a part of the network."

Another subscriber mentioned, "I find it helpful to hear other women's ideas about ag. policy, environmental issues, etc." Two respondents noted, "It is very valuable in helping me feel connected to and educated about women's issues in agriculture that I don't have time to search out by myself," and it is "A window on the world of the members, some of whom are different from others I hear from."

One longer response stated, "it is the most informative of all the lists I subscribe to, the information and point of view is most close to my own interests and ideas, and I find out about resources and activities that I would not know about from any other sources. After September 11, this was one of my main sources for hearing alternative voices and sharing both emotional and analytical responses to what had happened."

A Forum for Women

Most responses concurred that the stated mission of the WFAN listserv, "to link and amplify women's voices" was very important. Comments included: "There are not a lot of other avenues to get this sort of information and having a forum for a local, regional level is very important," and "It is very important and is of more use to those more directly involved in farming and interested in food systems policy."

Many replies addressed how much it means to connect with other women: "This is the only place I can find a women's perspective on agricultural issues, not that there may not be other voices out there, this is more convenient and I know many of the other women on the list, trust their credibility etc.," and "There are not many other avenues to connect with like-minded women around the specific topics of food and agriculture, and the shared ideas and resources, as well as just the knowledge of what others are doing, has been helpful to me in my work and personally."

One subscriber wrote, "WFAN is a place where I find like-minded women. The world is so much less lonely just knowing they are all there at the click of a button!" Another commented, "By linking together, these active women keep each other active. It is very important because women get a lot of things done."

Information Sharing

Topics that were mentioned several times include legislation, GMOs, the environment, job listings,

and women's issues in agriculture. "WFAN is like a reader's digest. I could probably find the information, but wouldn't take the time. For example bills being contemplated in the state or national legislatures," and "People on this listserv are on other listservs and the information they pass on is usually information I am not receiving elsewhere."

Others commented, "I have no other way to gain such insight from women farmers," and "Much of the information on international issues I wouldn't otherwise have access to." One respondent wrote: "I especially like to be kept up on the modified crops and the problems stemming from them," and another expressed appreciation for personal communication, "Mostly it provides commentary on issues for me, and I value the commentary from women. Just plain information comes from my work—so I see this as valuable insight and discussion rather than information."

Regional, national, and international issues elicited several comments: "There is a question in my mind of whether WFAN will develop other regional spin-offs spearheaded by individuals who want their own local news circle, or whether it will remain largely Iowa/Central U.S.," and "It is not an international organization, though it translates international issues into their relevant local counterpart. Therein is its strength and also what keeps it in Iowa."

Another writer commented, "I think women in [other states] need a list like this—but we also need the time to create our own "branch" of WFAN."

Joining the WFAN Listserv

To join the WFAN listserv, send a message to majordomo@iastate.edu with the command "subscribe wfan" (without the quotation marks) in the body of the message.

If you are a member you will be subscribed right away; if you are not a member you will be asked about how you heard about the list and your interest in WFAN's mission. The WFAN-list is an unmoderated list. Senders are responsible for content.



WFAN Member Takes the Reigns at PFI

Interview by Denise O'Brien

Susan Zacharakis-Jutz is a farmer and the newly elected President of Practical Farmers of Iowa, a grass-roots organization founded in 1987. Originally an all-farmer organization, PFI has expanded to include non-farmer members. On-farm research in collaboration with Iowa State University is the main focus of PFI.

During the past several years, PFI has developed a local food systems project that educates Iowans about growing and eating food produced in Iowa.

Following is an interview with Susan:

1. Tell us about your farm.

I bought my farm through the Iowa Beginning Farmer Program on April 1, 1994. The farm goes by two names - ZJ Farm and Local Harvest Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). The first harvest season for the farm was in 1997. For 2002, Local Harvest has a goal of 80 members. I farm with my husband Jeff, who is a Community Development Specialist for Iowa State University, and my children, Frances 17, Reuben 15, George 13, and David 9. We are all involved.

The children have raised hogs. Frances got a Youth Program Loan through the Farm Service Agency to purchase hogs. We have 65 ewes, 35 to 40 hogs and 15 to 20 milk goats. The hogs and lamb are sold directly to customers. The milk is made into cheese and sold on the organic liquid milk market. Everything produced on the farm is eaten by livestock or sold through direct sales.

Along with the CSA there are several enterprises that use the name Local Harvest. Goat cheese produced by Emily Silliman was first marketed under the Local Harvest name in 2001. Others are emerging: Rebecca Young will be raising transplants in her own greenhouse. Her goal is to have a CSA in the future. Heirlooms and seed saving is her specialty. Robin Christianson will create quick dinner packages that will include pasta, cheese and herbs so customers can purchase them at farmers markets, go home and have supper in thirty minutes!

Others working with me include Kate Hogg, my 2001 intern supported by

WFAN. Kate will be growing vegetables and coordinating the Cedar Rapids shareholders for 2002. Simone Alvarez has worked with me since 1996 and provides bread, eggs and flowers for Local Harvest. She also sells specialty bread at farmer's markets.

2. What do you find most rewarding?

What I really enjoy is the interaction with all the different people with all their ideas. My son Rueben and I were talking about how to use the new (used) tractor in crop rotation. Everyone is involved in the decision-making. I enjoy being in a position to let people explore their ideas and work them out.

I enjoy dealing with customers. I am awed by how what we do matters to people. It makes me feel optimistic about the future. I believe that personal relationships with the people who eat your food is more rewarding than growing a commodity and shipping it off in a truck. I grew up shipping things off the farm, and this is much better! What you produce matters to someone—my customers.

3. What do you find most challenging?

Juggling all the different responsibilities. We are not just farming. Those that are farming with me are marketing and creating social opportunities. We are not just raising crops. Marketing includes human interaction and relationships. We have a social responsibility in what we do. The enterprises that have evolved are complex and multi-dimensional.

Another challenge is being a woman in a male dominated occupation. People that are involved in traditional agriculture don't see me as a farmer. They don't speak to me as if I am in charge. Our Farm Service Agency officer had a hard time addressing me as the farmer rather than Jeff. Our banker has been great, though. He has been respectful and I have not had any problems. The problems seem to exist when I deal in traditional stuff like buying equipment and working with bureaucrats.

4. When and how were you elected to be the President of PFI?

I was elected as Vice President during my first three-year term as a director of

my district in 1999. PFI is divided into five districts and each district has two directors. The directors elect the officers. I was re-elected as a director in 2002 and then elected to be president.

5. What is your vision for PFI?

One thing that I would like to see is for PFI to become more visible. PFI needs to get our name out in the media more. PFI farmers do good things and we need recognition and visibility. This is a big priority with me. I will also work for the continued involvement of our non-farm members.

Another component important to me is youth involvement. PFI needs to reach the youth to show them alternatives. PFI needs to create educational forums to show young people about sustainable agriculture. The conventional agribusiness industry is out there in force. PFI needs more visibility and recognition to demonstrate that there are alternatives to industrial agriculture.

6. What do you think about the future of agriculture?

We are at a turning point with an opportunity to go one way or the other. We continue to lose more farms, but I am hopeful about the future. For example, our Senators have worked together on the farm bill and the fact that we are seeing conservation issues discussed is a major advancement. Congress is talking about limits on vertical integration, and that is potentially positive.

There are a lot of rumblings out there about things that need to change. There is the potential for positive change. A lot of people out there are trying to make their voices heard. The University of Iowa has released a study about hog lots and the environmental issues. The public is becoming better informed. The possibility is there, but can we change what happens in Washington, D.C.? I try to be hopeful. I hope that we can save some of the farmers that are left and create more farmers. In the alternative arena of local foods, new farmers, many women, are starting to farm. That is exciting. By creating awareness through local foods we can move the consumer to take a stand on some of these critical issues.

My Experience as a Mission Intern

by Stacey Brown

Two years ago I came to Iowa to work with the Women, Food, and Agriculture Network. It was the second half of a Mission Intern Program through the United Methodist Church. I had just spent 15 months in Japan at the Asian Rural Institute, a training center for community development organizers from Asia and Africa learning about sustainable agriculture, community, and food issues. It was time to take that experience home to the United States. I can't even begin to put the past two years into one article, but I want to share a little about my experience.

I had my first contact with WFAN during Mission Intern training in the summer of 1998, before I went to Japan. I was given their application to read because that was where I was going to go one and a half years later. I couldn't believe what I was reading. A women's organization which cared about food issues, the environment, sustainable agriculture, and their intersections with gender issues. It was exactly what I wanted in a placement site.

Through college and my time in Japan, I spent a lot of time learning about other countries and sustainable development. The focus on international kept me from understanding similar problems faced by people in the United States, especially farmers and rural communities. Through WFAN, I had the opportunity to not just learn about the situation here, but to feel it and interact with it. From traveling to Washington D.C. for the Rally for Rural America, to attending the Rural Advocacy Meetings at the Iowa State Capital, to talking about the struggles of small farmers in the United States, I have been able to meet all kinds of people and see change happening all around me.

At the beginning of the Mission Intern Program, I thought it would be difficult to realize that I couldn't change the world in three years and that I would only be contributing to a bigger movement for social justice. Women, Food and Agriculture Network is concerned with the world as it is today and is making change for the world tomorrow. I know that I contributed to that change.

This change starts with the earth, the land, and what we put into the land. It ranges from our environment to agriculture and into globalization. Women farmers, activists, and environmentalists, women young and old, coming together to discuss what we have to do to make a difference.

The Mission Intern Program emphasizes leadership development and social justice. WFAN members provided me with an internship experience that couldn't have been better. They have become important role models for what I will go on to do in my years to come.

Maybe I can't change the world by myself in three years, but I sure can be involved with a group like Women, Food, and Agriculture Network, which is changing the world a little at a time. How do I know that? I know for sure it changed me. For now, I am staying in Iowa and staying involved with WFAN through the Advisory Committee. I want to thank all of you for helping me have a wonderful experience as a Mission Intern. It has put me on a path I didn't know I would be on. Thank you.

Cutting Hay

by Janette Ryan-Busch

The keenly sharpened mower
slices summer fodder off at the
ankles.

Cut down in its prime
the heavy green gives a lightning
quick shutter
and falls to stubbled ground.
Throngs of mid-night blue swallows
streak the afternoon air.
Scanning the newly mown stripes
they dip and snatch bugs
in graceful arks of wing and bill.

At sunset the foxes will come
searching for and scooping up the
limp furred bodies
of mice and rabbits, caught off
guard
in the deadly surprise of mower.

If we win this gamble:
no rains come,
the blast furnace heat holds,
and nightly dew is sparing.
In two short days
this field will offer up
a thousand bales
of winter fattening hay.

Gambling on a three day sun
the deep steady purr of tractor
circles the hay field
over and over
a vulture moving in
on the fat green body of summer.
Ripples of heat rise from the ground
distorting view
like old wavy glass.
With each pass
startled Pheasants and Quail
sound alarm and burst to flight
fleeing the shadowed refuge of mid-
day sun.

Women Landowners

(Women, continued from page 1)

Interagency Team including the USDA Natural Resource and Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency in Cass County, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and Iowa State University Extension and College of Agriculture. This team works with the Women Landowners Advisory Committee; members include Marjorie Sothman, Rose Holste, Nancy Erickson, Jackie Pelzer, Billie Wilson, Margaret Magill, Karen Sudman, Mary Schrier, Mary Pat Gregersen, Marie Harris, and Delma Harris.

The Women Landowners Advisory Committee has validated the importance of our project and stressed the need for information and connections to institutional partners at times of critical decisions. Members have told about inheriting land through the sudden death of a spouse and of being left on their own to make decisions about their land – often under tight time constraints in a time of grief. Women who own land in partnership sometimes do not receive the information necessary to make well-informed management decisions. Joint owners tend to be overlooked, to become invisible and disenfranchised. To effectively reach women landowners requires understanding the diversity of partnership arrangements.

We recognize that considerable information on sustainable agriculture is available but may not reach the landowner. We hope to narrow this information gap by bringing together landowners and the agencies that provide the information. Agency professionals will also learn more about women landowners' needs (for networks, communication, community, and educational materials) and gender interests. We are using focus groups, surveys, and personal interviews to gather additional information on women's concerns and perceptions, preferred channels and formats for receiving information, and relationships to land, tenants, and community.

Our experience in Cass County is informing a new project in Chippewa County, Wisconsin. Partners will include

the Wisconsin Women's Sustainable Farming Network and River Country Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council.

The theme of women's relationship to the land is multi-faceted. We are also exploring women's spiritualities in the relation to the land and the land claims of indigenous peoples in the Americas and in other parts of the world. Our fledgling internship program matches aspiring, novice farmers with experienced women farmers. Many of these women farmers are also landowners. We believe that other women landowners, whether engaged in farming or not, might offer access to land for aspiring farmers.

WFAN member and photojournalist, Cynthia Vagnetti, will capture the stories of women farmers and landowners in *Gifts of the Land: Voices from Farm Women*, a video highlighting new agricultural practices and the relationship of women to the land. Her video will feature 24 women, eight each from Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, and will be used to reach a wide audience.

Seed resources for our land projects have been provided from a number of sources, notably the Ben and Jerry's Foundation, Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, and ISU Extension and College of Agriculture. WFAN member and supporters involved include Tanya Meyer, Angi Hansen, Jody Padgham, Stacey Brown, Diane Phillips, Betty Wells, and Denise O'Brien.

Citations:

Rogers, Denise and Ann Vandeman. 1993. *Women Farm Landlords in the U.S., USDA Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 681.*

Effland, Ann B., Denise Rogers, and Valerie Grim. 1993. "Women as agricultural landowners: what do we know about them?" *Agricultural History*. Spring 67 (2), 235-61.



Coordinator's Corner

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

This wonderfully mild winter is flying by, and before we know it, spring will be here! I always enjoy winter because it is a time to slow down and sometimes actually stop. But with such a warm winter this year, I don't believe many of us have slowed down very much.

I know many of you are visiting with your state legislators and United States Congressional representatives on issues ranging from national farm legislation to hog factories. It is important to keep in touch with them, letting them know how you feel. I have spent the last 15 years going to the State Capitol in Des Moines, calling our legislators out of session to let them know how I feel about legislation. To me there is a certain excitement in the air when visiting the capitol. The building itself is humming with activity, and there are people everywhere. It thrills me to see democracy in action even though I sometimes get cynical about how effective our input is.

This year looks to be a busy one in the world of Women, Food and Agriculture Network. We have received funding from the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church to continue our women landowner's project.

Cynthia Vagnetti will be in the Midwest taking pictures of farm women as she works on her photo documentary "Voices of Midwest Women."

More interns will be on more farms. Please be sure to get your application in so you can be considered for hosting an intern. WFAN is expanding the program this year to include more farms.

Soon WFAN will have our own website. This has been in the works and April 1st is our scheduled debut.

Well, it's time to get back to the seed catalog so I can dream and scheme about my garden for this year. It is such a pleasurable time for me, going through catalogs and planning my next garden. It is interesting though (and a good thing), the weeds never seem to enter into the realm of things this early in the season.

**Women, Food
& Agriculture
Network**

A Tides Center Project
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Membership is either \$30 or \$10 (your choice). Fill out this form and make your check payable to WFAN-Tides. This newsletter is a benefit of membership. We are a network of women with food, agricultural, environmental and economic concerns. Please share your thoughts, ideas, successes, interests, and solutions with us.

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