

# Women, Food & Agriculture Network

## WSSD, Its Successes and Failures

by Katy Hansen, Director, Iowa United Nations Association

United Nations Conferences provide an opportunity for the world to come together to talk about global issues and decide how to manage common resources for the benefit of all. Going into the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), there was hope that the nations would take action on a whole range of interrelated issues affecting the world's environment. What resulted was a disappointment in terms of the most forward-looking of the goals set up for the Conference, but a success in terms of progress made in some limited areas.

### Role of the United States

Perhaps the most disappointing was the lost opportunity for leadership by the U.S. As in the Rio Conference (The Earth Summit) ten years ago, the U.S. was the country in coalition with others to block progress and limit goals for stemming world environmental degradation. The U.S. repeatedly worked against setting concrete goals and was continually cited by activist groups as the major culprit in many of the environmental problems being addressed. The final document accepted in Johannesburg is non-binding and includes no strategy for

accomplishing the tasks ahead.

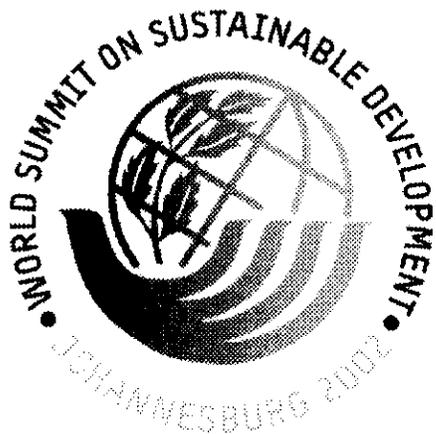
### The Disappointments

The most visible disappointment in the final document was the lack of targets for increasing the use of renewable energy and decreasing the number of people who live in poverty (those that live on less than \$1 a day). Both were included in the draft text but were deleted under pressure from the U.S.

Encouraging signatures on the Kyoto Protocol was watered down in the final document even though Russia, China, and Canada announced their own intent to join the protocol during the Johannesburg meetings. These announcements became one of the side successes as heads of state, one-after-another in their five-minute talks to the Conference, emphasized the need for progress on climate change, perhaps the most serious global problem needing immediate action.

Failure to address the involvement of corporations in environmental degradation and their responsibility in providing solutions is the single worst failure of the WSSD. The final document fails to guide the World Trade Organization toward a sustainable development point of view and no legally binding global framework

WSSD, 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

**October 21, 2002: The National Catholic Rural Life Conference** will present Dr. Kirschenmann and the Leopold Center with the first annual "International Local Food Award." Hotel Fort Des Moines, 6 p.m. This award is being inaugurated to recognize international leadership in sustainable agriculture. For reservations, call Darlene at 515-270-2634, or send a \$35 check made payable to NCRLC, 4625 Beaver Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50310.

**October 17, 2002, Ames, and October 27, 2002, Iowa City: Iowans' View on Johannesburg Summit:** Katy Hansen, Director of the Iowa UNA and local students who attended the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa this past August. For information, call Iowa UNA at 319-337-7290 or email: <unaiowa@inav.net>.

**October 24, 2002: Smithsonian Exhibit on Grasslands.** Des Moines. "Listening to the Prairie: Farming in Nature's Image," will appear at the downtown Des Moines Public Library. The exhibit explores the history of the vast grasslands of the North American prairie through the eyes of progressive farmers and ranchers who are reinventing their work in order to preserve their way of life. Visit <<http://www.desmoineslibrary.com>> and click on the link for "Listening to the Prairie."

**October 24-25, 2002: World Food Prize International Symposium.** Des Moines. "From the Middle East to the Middle West: Managing Freshwater Shortages and Regional Water Security." Focus is on the most critical issues involving water management around the globe. For more information, visit <<http://www.worldfoodprize.org>> or email to <[wfp@worldfoodprize.org](mailto:wfp@worldfoodprize.org)>.

**October 25, 2002: Rural Church Conference,** Sinsinawa, WI. Celebrate rural life and work on means to engage the public on rural issues. Denise O'Brien (WFAN), Robert Karp (Practical Farmers of Iowa), and WFAN members, Carol Smith (NCRLC), and Laura Krouse will present. Sinsinawa is 10 min. east of Dubuque. registration is \$20. Contact 608-748-4411 ex.805, or <[cclp@mwci.net](mailto:cclp@mwci.net)>.

**November 7-8, 2002: Trees Forever Celebration, "Native People, Native Plants."** Ames at the ISU Memorial Union. Workshops on such topics as Planning and Planting Projects Using Iowa's Native Plants, Cultural Considerations for Archaeological Clearance, Trees and Fungi, and Oak Savanna Restoration and Reconstruction. For more information contact Lora Bopp, 800-369-1269.

**November 8-10, 2002: 3rd Annual Tristate Fall Harvest Women's Gathering. "Rooted in Community."** Camp Ewalu, Strawberry Point, Iowa. Carolyn Raffensperer, environmental activist, will be the keynote speaker. Registration \$85 for four meals and lodging for the weekend. Contact Stacey at 515-233-4409 or <[staceyleighbrown@yahoo.com](mailto:staceyleighbrown@yahoo.com)>.

**November 8-9, 2002: NCRLC Annual Conference, "Sustainable Communities in an Era of Globalization."** Dearborn, MI. 79th annual gathering of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference features Luther Snow, Dr. Ernesto sirolli, Sue Bertrand, and Judith Heffernan. Contact Sister Pauline Tursi, at 515/270.2634 or <[ncrlcspt@aol.com](mailto:ncrlcspt@aol.com)>.

**November 8-10, 2002: Tenth Urban-Rural Food Systems Conference, "Taking Back the Middle: Creating New Relationships From Farm to Table."** East Troy, WI. See <<http://www.michaelfieldsagainst.org>> or call Gail Kahovic at 262-642-3303. Kynotes: Fred Kirschenman from the Leopold Center for sustainable Agriculture.

**November 20, 2002: Second Iowa Organic Conference,** Ankeny, IA. \$60. Keynote speaker Eliot Coleman on "Year-round Organic Farming and Greenhouse Production. See <<http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/organicag/events/orgconfnov02.pdf>> or call Kathleen Delate at 515-294-7096.

**December 6-7, 2002: Local Food System Conference,** Ames. 8th annual featuring Kent Whealy of Seed Savers Exchange. Workshop focuses on the need to preserve and build a diverse plant gene pool, diverse soil life, and diverse local foods systems. Contact: Jan Libbey, 641-495-6367; <[libland@frontiernet.net](mailto:libland@frontiernet.net)> or Gary Guthrie, 515.382-3117; <[ghfguthrie@hotmail.com](mailto:ghfguthrie@hotmail.com)>.

### 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:

December issue: November 15

Address: 59624 Chicago Road  
Atlantic, IA 50022-9619  
712-243-3264

Newsletter Production:

Denise O'Brien  
([CoWfan@metc.net](mailto:CoWfan@metc.net))

Katy Hansen  
([kwhansen@ia.net](mailto:kwhansen@ia.net))

Betty Wells  
([bwells@iastate.edu](mailto:bwells@iastate.edu))

**December 12-14, 2002: "Retooling your Eco-Farm,"** Eco-Farming '02, Acres USA Annual Conference for Commercial-Scale Organic/Sustainable Agriculture. Adam's Mark Hotel, Indianapolis-Airport, Indianapolis, IN. Cost range: \$95-185. Registration/Info: 800-355-5313 or visit <[www.acresusa.com](http://www.acresusa.com)>.

**January 23-26, 2002: 22nd Annual Eco-Farm Conference,** Asilomar, CA. This four-day forum is the world's foremost sustainable agriculture conference. "Eco-Farm" features prominent keynote speakers and more than 50 workshops on the latest advances in agricultural production, marketing, research, and important issues. Check out the conference website at: <[http://www.csa-efc.org/efc/efc\\_main.html](http://www.csa-efc.org/efc/efc_main.html)>. Eco-Farm, 406 Main St., Suite 313 Watsonville, CA, 95076; e-mail: <[info@eco-farm.org](mailto:info@eco-farm.org)>.

## Briefs

Members of the Women, Food and Agriculture Network donated raffle prizes for the annual Iowa Shares Raffle held in August. Liz Garst of Coon Rapids, IA donated a guided astronomy tour at the Garst Family Resort. Nancy Dundatsheck donate a black and white photograph, and WFAN put together an all Iowa basket of goodies. John Carhoff and Angela Major of Iowa City and Catholic Peace Ministry in Des Moines were winners of these prizes.

Thanks to those buying raffle tickets and contributing prizes. The money raised goes to support Iowa Shares, a coalition of social action nonprofit organizations building better communities.

The fall campaign to sign up for workplace giving is now underway. If your employer offers the opportunity, we would appreciate your participation and support!

## Resources

### Sustainable Farming Video

*Growing Against the Grain*, by Gunderfriend Productions, presents farmers in Audubon County who are working to build healthy food systems, maintain viable farms, put the culture back in agri-

culture, and restore a lost spirit to their communities through sustainable farming and direct marketing. Audio portions of the video, as well as a link to the producer, can be found at <[http://www.pfi.iastate.edu/Media/Audubon\\_Co.htm](http://www.pfi.iastate.edu/Media/Audubon_Co.htm)>.

Video (length 30 min) cost is \$20 including sales tax and shipping in contiguous 48 states. Order from Gunderfriend Productions, P.O. Box 179, Gilbert, Iowa 50105.

### Websites

<<http://www.heinzctr.org/ecosystems>> The "State of the Nation's Ecosystems" is the result of five years of review of existing environmental research, and concludes that major gaps exist in what we know about the nation's lands, waters, and living resources, and that more comprehensive information could aid future environmental and land management policy decisions.

<<http://www.gprc.org>> The Great Plains Resource Council's mission is to restore the ecological health of a significant portion of the North American Great Plains ecosystem, so that all native wildlife and ecological processes exist into perpetuity. Lots of information on activities on these fronts.

<<http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/mmag/>> Iowa State University maintains links to bills affecting livestock facilities that are active in the legislative session.

### Books

**Forging Our Future: Women in Agriculture**, 2000, Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific (PAN AP).

Discussion of issues for women in agriculture, as evaluated in PAN AP Task Force on Women in Agriculture meeting in April 1997. Explores impacts of increased export crop production and industrialization of agriculture, international trade agreements and structural adjustments. US\$10. Contact PAN AP, P.O. Box 1170, 10850 Penang, Malaysia; tel.: 604-657-0271 and 656-0381; email <[panap@panap.po.my](mailto:panap@panap.po.my)>; website: <<http://www.poptel.org.uk/panap/>>.

**Women's Equality: An Unfinished Agenda**, 2000, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO).

Assessment of U.S. government

actions on implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, a broad-based agenda for promoting and protecting women's human rights and basic freedoms worldwide. Includes discussion of poverty, education, health, violence against women, armed conflict, economics, decision-making and more. 64 pp. Download free at <<http://www.wedo.org>> or US\$15 for hardcopy. Contact WEDO, 355 Lexington Ave., 3rd floor, New York, NY 10017-6603; tel.: 212-973-0325; email: <[wedo@igc.org](mailto:wedo@igc.org)>; website: <<http://www.wedo.org>>.

**Risks, Rights and Reforms: A 50-Country Survey Assessing Government Actions Five Years After the International Conference on Population and Development**, 1999, Bharati Sadasivam (editor), Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO).

Report shows that governments have partnered with non-governmental organizations, the United Nations and international agencies to advance reproductive and sexual health and rights. Includes discussion of negative impacts of economic reforms on women's access to basic and reproductive health services. Also includes discussion of damage to women's reproductive systems caused by exposures to pesticides and other chemicals. 251 pp. US\$19.95. Contact WEDO, 355 Lexington Ave., 3rd floor, New York, NY 10017-6603; tel.: 212-973-0325; email: <[wedo@igc.org](mailto:wedo@igc.org)>; website: <<http://www.wedo.org>>.

**Where Women Have No Doctor: A Health Guide for Women (Donde No Hay Doctor Para Mujeres)**, 1997, A. August Burns, Ronnie Lovich, Jane Maxwell, Katherine Shapiro.

Provides information about a wide range of women's health problems, using simple language and hundreds of pictures. Combines self-help medical information with discussion of ways in which poverty, discrimination and cultural beliefs limit women's health and access to health care. Contact the Hesperian Foundation, 1919 Addison Street, Suite 304, Berkeley, CA 94704; tel.: 510-845-1447; email: <[hesperian@hesperian.org](mailto:hesperian@hesperian.org)>; website: <<http://www.hesperian.org>>.

# Iowa's Conservation Cuts: Consequences and Choices

By Duane Sand and Mark Bequeaith

Iowa's conservation programs took a disproportionate hit in recent state budget cuts. What were those cuts and what might they mean for Iowa?

## The Big Picture

In addition to the 4.7% across-the-board cuts in the 2003 budget, Iowa's conservation programs lost an additional 33%—or \$22 million. Add in money diverted from “dedicated” environmental funds to balance the general budget, and Iowa's conservation spending has been cut more than \$100 million in recent years.

Iowa committed 1.2% of last year's state budget to its land, water and wildlife—well below the national average. The 2003 cuts put Iowa's conservation spending at 0.9%. In other words, Iowa now devotes less than one penny of every discretionary state dollar to water quality, soil conservation, environmental education, natural areas, and wildlife habitat.

To responsibly meet the priorities and needs of the people of Iowa, public funding for conservation and water quality must increase—not decrease.

## Cuts and Consequences

Several conservation programs took large cuts while others were “zeroed out.” Though the cuts brought short-term savings, their long-term consequences are costly indeed.

- **Ag Drainage Well Closure:** Iowa had budgeted \$1.5 million per year to close 160 agricultural drainage wells, which deliver bacteria, nitrates and herbicides directly into ground water. Funding was cut to zero.
- **Brownfields Redevelopment:** This program, managed by the Iowa Department of Economic Development, supported clean up and redevelopment of chemical spill sites. Zero funding, while several hundred sites still need help.
- **Soil Conservation Cost Share:** The Division of Soil Conservation offered landowners cost-share opportunities to

implement soil, water and wildlife protection. Farmer demand has always outstripped funding. In the Page Soil and Water Conservation District, for example, more than 400 applications are currently pending. Funds for the program were cut in half—meaning the state will have 18,000 fewer acres helping protect Iowa's soil and water.

- **Sustainable Agriculture Research:** The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture lost 86% of its budget. All new project work has stopped. Public money for the Leopold Center has come from the Ag Management Account—a fund from chemical fertilizer and pesticide sales that has generated an average of \$1.28 million over the past four years. \$1 million was transferred from the Ag Management Account to the General Fund in the state's most recent budget.
- **Septic System Upgrades:** The Onsite Wastewater Loan Program is designed to help homeowners upgrade outdated septic systems, of which more than 100,000 exist in Iowa. Funding was cut in half. With an 80% federal match on these loans, this year's budget “savings” of \$300,000 cost the state \$1.5 million worth of water quality protection activity.
- **CREP:** Iowa's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program lost all of its unspent funds. At a minimum the fund raid slows the construction of nearly 9,000 acres of wetlands and buffers in Iowa. If the state continues failing to provide its share, Iowa could lose the federal grant, costing the state more than \$38 million dollars in water quality improvement activity.
- **REAP:** Iowa's Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funding was cut from \$10 million to \$2 million. Of course, many programs have been completely eliminated.
- **Environmental Education grants** that funded 99% of the professionally accredited conservation education courses for Iowa's teachers.
- **County conservation board grants** totaled 20% of REAP funds, and were

used for environmental education, equipment and park operations. These grants provided special funds for more than 20 county parks per year. They no longer exist.

- **Historical resource programs** were eliminated. Meaning 46 projects in Iowa that were ready to get the green light are now sitting on red. Budget cut “savings” may cost us the country schoolhouse attended by Nobel Peace Prize winner and Iowa native Norman Borlaug.
- **Local watershed protection programs** costing just \$2 million annually are discontinued. Up to ten multi-year water quality improvement projects must stay on the drawing board.

## A Matter of Priorities

Iowans are told these cuts reflect a poor economy. Yes, state revenues were down by 2% last year. But a softer economy is not the only dynamic at work.

Tax cuts since 1996 have reduced state revenues by more than \$855 million a year. This year's budget crisis would not even exist without the “over-exuberant” tax cutting of the late 90's.

With so many valuable local conservation and water quality programs either gone or in limbo, as Iowans, we need to ask ourselves about priorities.

Conservation depends primarily on responsible decisions by individuals. But when the state neglects its share of the responsibility for natural resources, it encourages individuals and other institutions to neglect their responsibilities as well. A responsible state budget would make a greater commitment to conservation and water quality efforts.

The bottom line: If we want people to choose Iowa as a place to live, work and play, conservation and water quality must become a higher priority and garner more significant public commitment.

*(Duane Sand is an independent policy consultant working for conservation groups in Iowa, including the Natural Heritage Foundation. Mark Bequeaith is the Communications Director for the Iowa Environmental Council.)*

# Summer Meeting A Success

by Denise O'Brien, Coordinator, WFAN

WFAN members completed the strategic planning meeting newly energized to proceed with the work set before us. The meeting, held July 16-18 at the Iowa Conservation Education Center at Springbrook State Park, Guthrie Center, Iowa attracted 30 women from across the United States. In addition to Iowa, women came from Missouri, New Jersey, California, Michigan, and Washington D.C. They represented farming operations, land grant institutions, organic farming organizations, student organizations and religious institutions. Nearly half of the women were new to WFAN; one-third of the attendees were in their 20's.

The meeting began with a tour of Full Circle Farm, owned and operated by Don Adams and Nan Bonfils. Bonfils has been a WFAN member since 1997. Full Circle Farm is a 300 acre, diversified farm transitioning to organic production. The operation includes grass fed beef and lamb and specialty enterprises in agroforestry, composting food waste from a nearby summer camp, and a CSA. The tour centered participants on the land, on a working farm, and set the context of the work for the next two days.

WFAN worked with facilitator Jonna Higgins-Freese to plan the strategic planning session. Jonna guided us through large and small group activities that encouraged all to participate. Jonna is an environmental educator with experience bridging the gap between agriculture and the environment.

## Speakers

Teresa Opheim, Regional Director of the Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, of which WFAN is a member, started the meeting with an overview and analysis of the 2002 Farm Bill. Opheim emphasized that the Farm Bill continued the huge subsidy payments of large farms and did nothing to address the systemic issues caused by industrial agriculture. However, among farm bills it is unique in the magnitude of appropriations for conservation and environmental practices. She facilitated discussions about specific conservation

measures and what impact they will have on the agriculture community.

Suzanne Abromaitis of the Humane Society of the United States discussed factory farms and their impact on animal welfare. The Farm Bill, in Abromaitis' view, lacks any protection for animals and offers no stops on industrialized, factory farm agribusiness. She encouraged participants to become more involved in the fight against factory farms and detailed the Humane Society's hog campaign in Iowa emphasizing moratorium on the building of confinement facilities. Upon returning to her work in Washington D.C., Suzanne posted an article about her Iowa experience on the HSUS webpage.

Elizabeth Horton-Plasket, Director of the Iowa Environmental Council, discussed working in the Iowa Legislature on the issues of air and water quality in relation to the presence of hog factories in the Iowa countryside. Horton-Plasket was involved on a daily basis on the issues of air and water quality and local control. She offered insight into the politically-charged drastic funding cuts to the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and why it is so important for Iowans to demand that legislators restore funding. She also put Iowa's spending on environment into a national context—nearly at the bottom of the entire United States. WFAN is also a member of the IEC.

Dana Jackson spoke about her book, *The Farm as Natural Habitat: Reconnecting Food Systems with Ecosystems*. She divided us into small groups to identify potential allies in garnering support for sustainable agriculture, thus deepening our understanding and activism about the environment in relation to agriculture. As one member stated, "Agriculture is OUR environmental issue!"

In small groups, we worked on a number of action plans including the effective implementation of the Farm Bill. When asked, "What do you plan to do, either individually or with others, as a result of your time here?" we responded in some of the following ways: politi-

cal education around the elections; work on a research project connected to WFAN; get more involved with more of the political activism that WFAN is a part of; outreach to college students like myself; form a chapter or group similar to WFAN in my state.

## Action Ideas

An objective of our meeting was to expand our leadership base. An idea emerging from small group work was to develop a women's leadership institute to reach out to and include women in the sustainable agriculture community. A number of participants committed to work on the leadership institute.

On the final morning of the meeting, Denise O'Brien and Betty Wells reported on the Women Farmland Owners Project. Attendees, including women landowners as well as women aspiring to be farmers and landowners, discussed access to land and credit, knowledge of a working farm, and political issues related to women's land ownership. WFAN plans to expand this project to other counties in Iowa and to other states by utilizing the energies of the women present.

Meals featured local foods. WFAN worked with the chef several weeks prior to the meeting on a meal plan incorporating food acquired from local farmers.

The meeting closed with commitments to continue and expand the work of WFAN:

- The listserv and the newsletter will alert members to action on pending Farm Bill issues,
- A consultation will bring together an advisory group on outreach to women of color
- The women landowners project will expand to other counties in Iowa and to other states as funding becomes available.

*(This meeting was supported by the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation and the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University.)*

# Fateful Harvest: A True Story

## Book Review



**Fateful Harvest:  
The True Story of a  
Small Town, a  
Global Industry,  
and a Toxic Secret**  
by Duff Wilson,  
HarperCollins, 2001,

ISBN: 0-06-019369-7, \$26.00.

*Review copyrighted by Dorene Pasekoff,  
Coordinator St. John's United Church of  
Christ Organic Community Garden,  
Phoenixville, PA*

Self-sufficiency has always been the ideal in sustainable agriculture. Whether one's methods are biodynamic, biointensive or just tips picked up from Rodale Press's monthly e-mail newsletters, all of them encourage growers to reduce purchased inputs and to "grow your own soil fertility" through the use of cover crops, mulch, compost and crop rotation.

Lots of us put off achieving this ideal, any ideal, to a time in the future when we'll have more time, more help, more space, more anything. Other items in our life are more pressing. However, after reading "Fateful Harvest," you may decide there's nothing more pressing than taking that home composting course (many of which offer free bins at course completion) with your local cooperative extension agent or dusting off what Steiner had to say about nutrient cycling on the family farm.

Why? Because it's legal to "recycle" hazardous wastes as fertilizer for use by both farmers and home gardeners. When given the choice between paying high tipping fees to dispose of their industrial waste in a hazardous waste landfill or selling the waste as fertilizer, many corporations make the choice that adds dollars to their bottom line.

Duff Wilson, an investigative reporter for the Seattle Times, was highly skeptical when Patty Martin, mayor of Quincy, Washington, and a group of farmers who believed their land had been contaminated by hazardous waste "fertilizer" contacted him in desperation. Their charges that the local Cenex Supply and Marketing office had drained the contents of their rinsate pond (a concrete-lined pond used to store leftover chemi-

icals) to "fertilize" local fields had made them pariahs in the community. As Cenex was a major employer in Quincy and supplied seed and agricultural chemicals to most of the farmers in the region, few Quincy residents wanted to hear anything negative about the company.

Wilson went to Quincy, looked over Martin's data, then started surfing the Web for collaboration. (Wilson is the author of *The Reporter's Desktop*, <http://www.reporter.org/desktop>, his listing of "the best of the web" search tools for reporters.) Unfortunately, he found so much collaboration from government and industry websites that the Seattle Times agreed that "recycling" hazardous wastes into fertilizer was not simply an isolated incident in a small Washington State town, but an industry-wide practice with global implications. The editors put Wilson on the story, to interview those involved and follow up wherever those interviews might lead. The result was the series, "Fear in the Fields: How Hazardous Wastes Become Fertilizer" <[http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/news/special/fear\\_fields.html](http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/news/special/fear_fields.html)> (original and follow-up articles) published on July 3, 1997 and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service.

Unfortunately, the series caused a lot of flurry, but not much action. The Washington State Department of Agriculture now lists their data on the heavy metals found in fertilizers registered in that state at <<http://www.wa.gov/agr/pmd/fertilizers/metals.htm>> —the only state to follow through on such promises to inform the public. Wilson, sitting on piles of notes from his investigation and still receiving angry calls from industry representatives, decided to expand his series into a book.

The result, *Fateful Harvest: The True Story of a Small Town, a Global Industry, and a Toxic Secret* is a highly readable narrative of Patty Martin's initial suspicions which hand off into Wilson's meticulous tracking of how hazardous waste magically, in the eyes of industry and government alike, becomes plain old fertilizer that anyone can buy and store on a shelf in the garage to be sprinkled on food plants whenever they like.

Wilson is an excellent storyteller who keeps the story moving through character (and does he meet characters!) and incident, yet documents his collaborating data through extensive endnotes that back up every assertion without bogging down the narrative flow. If you care about soil, this book will make you howling mad, but you won't be able to put it down until the last page.

Quincy's residents were so howling mad at Patty Martin when the original series was published that she was trounced in her bid for re-election as mayor, but she bounced back with a website at <http://www.safefoodandfertilizer.com/> where she and the Washington Toxics Coalition at <http://www.watoxics.org> continue to press for fertilizer that is "cleaner than dirt." After reading this book, check out the websites, even if it's only to make sure the fertilizers you've purchased are safe.

Corporate culture and government regulations often change with the pace of glaciers. While we work for that change, let's also remember the advice of Steiner, Jeavons and the Rodales on building soil. In that spirit, I remind you that the Compost Resource Page is at <http://www.oldgrowth.org/compost/>

## Coordinator's Corner

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

As we transition from the summer season to the fall, it is time to reflect on what we accomplished this summer. The highlight for me was the summer meeting when 30 of us came together to share, learn and determine the priorities for WFAN. It was great having the women from outside Iowa present. Meeting new people and learning new things always energizes me to continue the work of the Network. The majority of those attending were young women in their twenties. What a delight!

Our Women Farmland Owner's Project has taken a giant step forward. A survey has been sent to nearly 700 women who own land in Cass County, Iowa. The Women's Advisory Committee worked hard to develop, revise and pretest the survey. Pernell Plath, a gradu-

ate student in Iowa State University's Graduate Program in Sustainable Agriculture, is working on this project for her master's thesis. By the end of the year we will begin to see the results.

During the year, there are far too many meetings for me to attend. I invite anyone interested to help out and learn a bit in the process. Many of the meetings are in central Iowa—in Des Moines, Ames, or Grinnell. Rural Advocacy meetings, a group that works on state policy issues, are held in Des Moines. Iowa Shares meetings, our alternative funding organization, meets in Grinnell, Iowa. The Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (MSAWG) was last held in Madison, Wisconsin, and will be meeting the end of January in Nebraska City, Nebraska. Sometimes there are national or international meetings. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to represent WFAN in these or others closer to your home bioregion. It is important for us to build leadership within our organization. Contact me at [CoWFAN@metc.net](mailto:CoWFAN@metc.net) or 712-243-3264 if you are interested and have the time.

The Fall Harvest Tri-State Women's Gathering is once again convening, this time in Strawberry Point, Iowa at Camp EWALU. This is the third year that women in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa are gathering to celebrate, learn and share. "Rooted in Community" is this year's theme with our keynote speaker Carolyn Raffensperger, an environmental activist. Workshops include Business and Farming, Interns on Your Farm, Hand Tool Safety and Use, and Soils. We will have a wonderful musician in our midst. Sara Thomsen from northern Minnesota will perform as well as inspire us to sing. Our food once again will be coordinated by GROWN Locally. We will make pasta for our Saturday evening meal as we celebrate Slow Food. The cost is \$85 for two nights lodging and meals. Registration brochures have been sent out. For further registration information, contact Stacey at 515-233-4409 or [staceyleighbrown@yahoo.com](mailto:staceyleighbrown@yahoo.com).

Enjoy the fall and the pleasures that come with the changing of the seasons.

## WSSD, Its Successes and Failures

*(WSSD, continued from page 1)*

for corporate accountability was included. Short-term corporate interests won out over long-term survivability of our global resources. Nations, often less powerful than even a single multinational corporation, have little chance of preserving their own small part of the world without standards of conduct and accountability set by the international community.

### The Successes

There were successes at WSSD! Some firm commitments were made:

- 1) Nations are to work to halve the number of people living without water and sanitation services by 2015.
- 2) Nations are to restore fish stocks in vulnerable water areas by 2015.
- 3) Nations are to reduce the extinction rate of plants and animals by 2010.
- 4) Dangerous chemicals are to be used and produced in ways that minimize adverse effect by 2020.

Principle 10 from Agenda 21 relative to access to information, participation in decision-making, and economic justice was maintained along with the precautionary principle and the concept of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Poverty was recognized as a major contributor to environmental problems, and good governance was cited as a necessary element in national solutions.

### Partnerships

One of the most interesting and potentially most positive ideas developed in the two-year-long WSSD negotiations is the concept of Type 2 partnerships. When it became clear that the nations themselves would not be able to come up with clear global solutions to environmental problems, the partnership concept was introduced in the hopes of promoting solutions through voluntary commitments



*WFAN members Gina McAndrews (left) and Katy Hansen (2nd from left) participated in a panel on Sustainable Futures for Iowa sponsored by the Iowa United Nations Association at the Summit's NGO Global Forum. Others from left are Holly Killmer, Lynn Laws, and Margaret Englesson. Gina McAndrews (above) and Erin Tegtmeier and Pernell Plath (not pictured), all students at Iowa State University, received financial contributions from WFAN to attend the Summit.*

between national governments, corporations and/or civil society. Supporters feel partnerships are the hope for progress on specific problems around the world.

Many in civil society, however, fear the increase in participation of the already powerful corporations. The corruption of both national governments and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to the wealth of industry is seen as a concern.

### What Is In It For Us?

Although the final document seems a long way away from our own local communities and their particular needs, the opposite is the case. The principles and ideas incorporated in both the Agenda 21 document from Rio and the Johannesburg Plan of Action need to be translated into local law and custom.

By doing this we will build into our social compact a set of guidelines for corporations, governments and people. It is the translation of global environmental standards into local practice that will eventually lead to solutions. Local solutions will then become the global reality.

Government entities, corporations, and nonprofit organizations can and should be in partnership for a better and sustainable community. It may well be that the success of the partnerships will determine the survivability of our common good.

# Women, Food & Agriculture Network

A Tides Center Project  
59624 Chicago Road  
Atlantic, IA 50022-9619



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