

Women, Food & Agriculture Network

Healthy and Humane:

The Floyd Boulevard Local Foods Market

by Chris Bedford

At 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 15th, Father Marvin Boes rang a farm yard bell to signal the opening of a new kind of farmers' market in Siouxland—a market that intentionally sells only local food raised in a natural and humane manner. The market—called the Floyd Boulevard Local Foods Market—is a project of Sustainable Foods for Siouxland (SFFS), a joint farmer and consumer effort to establish a humane and sustainable local food supply for the region, and the Care4Iowa Campaign of The Humane Society of the United States.

“The quarter of a million people who live within 75 miles of Sioux City spend over three hundred and twenty million dollars on food each year,” said SFFS President (and farmer) Elaine Knudson of Sergeant Bluff. “Less than one percent of that money is spent on food raised locally. We want to change that.”

The Floyd Boulevard Local Foods Market rules specify a set of standards for the raising of fruit, vegetables and meat products that exceed those of other stores and markets in the region.

“The Floyd Boulevard market goes beyond local. Our farmers only sell food and products they have grown themselves,” said Market Manager Michelle Oehlerking of Sioux City. “The products sold in our market must be grown naturally, without the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or toxic substances. Animal products must be raised humanely. And we believe in transparency. Farmers allow the market to verify all statements about how their products are raised.”

The market opened on Saturday, May 15th with over two hundred people coming to buy a variety of vegetable and fruit products available early in the growing season. Jan Garrity and her son Sam sold incredible, organic fresh asparagus as well as soups, jams, and pies. Chuck Hinricksen, a working Sioux City firefighter and dedicated organic and humane farmer, sold free-range eggs and grass-fed beef. David Williams popped organic popcorn and sold certified organic grains (wheat, rye, barley), popcorn and corn meal. Dennis Schuett sold incredible hydroponic tomatoes from a

(Market, continued on page 4)



Mission

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



Calendar

July 23-24th, 2004: WFAN Summer Meeting at Inn the Hunt, Kanawha, Iowa, Jan Libbey host. Activities start Friday at 7:00 p.m. and end on Saturday at 7:00 p.m. Visit local farmer's market, canoeing, and participate in Jan's field day. Contact Denise O'Brien at <cowfan@metc.net> or 712-243-3264.

August 12-22, 2004: Booth in the Agricultur Building at the Iowa State Fair sponsored by WFAN and Iowa Farmer's Union. Cynthia Vagnetti's *Voices from Iowa Farm Women* will be featured (see story page 3). On Saturday, August 14th there will be a public presentation featuring a video of Iowa farm women and a discussion on women in agriculture.

August 21, 2004: Iowa Farmers Union State Convention, Comfort Suites at Living History Farms, Urbandale, IA. Registration begins at 8 a.m. Members will adopt policy, hear excellent speakers, take part in educational workshops and enjoy food provided by the Iowa Machine Shed restaurant. Contact the office at 800-775-5227 for information.

November 12-14, 2004 WFAN's Annual Women's Fall Harvest Gathering. Watch for more details.

Practical Farmers of Iowa Field Days with WFAN Members

(for a full list of PFI field days, see www.practicalfarmers.org)

July 28, 2004: 6:30-9:30 p.m., Laura Krouse, 825 Abbe Hills Road, Mt. Vernon, 319-895-6924. Large CSA garden walk, genetic diversity in vegetables, snacking from the garden, and planting demonstration with Mechanical 1000, 1-row transplanter. Observations of a young prairie and wetland. Demonstrations of attractant traps for cucumber beetles in zucchini. Discussion about open pollinated and hybrid corn.

Aug. 7, 2004: 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., House of Mercy, 1409 Clark St., Des Moines. Digging Deeper Project Tour. Project creating edible perennial landscapes at nine central city neighborhood-based institutions. Presentations on urban rain gardens using native plant species; the

process of creating a perennial edible landscape through community involvement. On-site lunch. Contact: Rick Hartmann, PFI Local Food Systems Coordinator, 515-232-5661, ext. 104.

Aug. 21, 2004: 9 a.m., Buy Fresh, Buy Local, Angela Tedesco, Turtle Farm, 10743 NW 142nd St. (Hwy17), Granger, 515-278-4522. The tour also includes Jeff and Jill Burkhart of Burkhart's Picket Fence, 1447 S Ave., Woodward, 515-438-COWS (2697).

Southwest Iowa Family Farms Directory: a new tool for farmers and consumers

A new online tool is now available for southwest Iowa's small and mid-size farmers who are seeking ways to expand their markets and increase profitability. The Southwest Iowa Family Farms Directory is a free service offered by the Henry A. Wallace Chair for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University. The aim of the

directory is to increase communication and cooperation among southwest Iowa farmers in order to share costs and build the infrastruc-

ture necessary for cooperative marketing, processing and distribution. At the directory website, which is available at <www.wallacechair.iastate.edu>, farmers can set up an account and answer a short questionnaire to create a profile for their farm. Farmers can then search the directory for information about other producers in their area, including information about products, transportation, processing and storage, marketing, and interest in cooperation with other farmers.

Consumers can also search the website to find farmers in their area selling home-grown produce, meats, dairy, and craft items. To learn more about the Southwest Iowa Family Farms Directory, visit the website or contact the program's coordinator, Cassi Johnson, at <cassi@iastate.edu> or 515-294-6061.



Women, Food and Agriculture Network

This newsletter is published by the **Women, Food and Agriculture Network**, a Tides Center Project. We welcome suggestions, stories, and news from your part of the world. Our emphasis is on women's lives, their relationships, communities and families. We welcome first person articles, analyses, book or video reviews, original poetry and art, and letters to editor. Deadlines for upcoming issues:

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

Newsletter Production:

Denise O'Brien
(CoWfan@metc.net)

Katy Hansen
(kwhansen@ia.net)

Mary Swalla Holmes
(msholm@prairienet.net)

Betty Wells
(bwells@iastate.edu)

IFU: The Progressive Farm Organization

(Editor's Note: In January 2004, WFAN joined the Iowa Farmer's Union (IFU) as an Associate Member. IFU is subsidizing the cost of membership for one year to determine if association with WFAN will benefit both organizations. WFAN is working with IFU on a booth at the Iowa State Fair (see article at right). Below is a description of the IFU by Leigh Adcock, Office Manager.)

Some people hear the word "union" and think of organized labor. In reality, the National Farmers Union was founded in 1902 by 10 Texas farmers, before labor unions started. It grew by leaps and bounds until today National Farmers Union represents 300,000 farmers and ranchers all over the United States.

The mission of Farmers Union is to sustain and strengthen the family farm agricultural system in the U.S. through education, cooperation and legislation. Members come from all political and ethnic backgrounds.

Twenty-three states have Farmers Union chapters, including the Iowa Farmers Union, which represents about 800 members. IFU isn't the largest farm organization in the state, but through grassroots advocacy, it is the most effective at representing the needs of small and medium-sized farmers and rural residents, as well as consumers who want safe, nutritious food and support the development of local food systems.

Iowa Farmers Union maintains a full-time legislative liaison, Carlos Jayne, who informs legislators of our members' desires and concerns. You can read his summary of the 2004 session at <www.iafu.org>.

Farmers Union has been a vocal proponent of country-of-origin food labeling at both state and national levels. We have pushed for full funding of CSP (Conservation Security Program).

Iowa Farmers Union was among the group of environmental, ag and consumer health groups which supported Gov. Vilsack's veto of the weak air quality bill passed by the Iowa legislature.



IFU has consistently fought for county control of livestock confinement siting, and has won victories in two Iowa counties with a county health ordinance controlling the siting of proposed confinement facilities. IFU opposes packer ownership of livestock.

Iowa Farmers Union conducts educational programs on cooperative business for children and adults, through its Iowa Farmers Union Education Foundation. For example, groups of high school FFA (Future Farmers of America) students recently toured central Iowa cooperatives including an agricultural cooperative, credit union and natural foods store. This summer, day camps will be held in five rural communities to teach the principles of cooperative structure. For more information about Iowa Farmers Union, including membership, visit <www.iafu.org>. Those living outside Iowa, visit the National Farmers Union website at <www.nfu.org>.

Volunteers Needed for State Fair Exhibit

WFAN and IFU are seeking volunteers to work during the Iowa State Fair. They will staff a booth in the Agricultural Building from August 12-22. We need volunteers to work four hour shifts: 9-1, 1-5, 5-9. Ticket and parking will be provided. Please contact Leigh at 800-775-5227 to schedule.

The booth will consist of a six-sided free standing display panels with 30 black and white photographs of farm women across America (see article below). Also included in the display will be six narrative text panels. Their stories represent small and medium-sized farming operations with value-added and innovative marketing practices.

Volunteers will have the opportunity to share stories with fair participants about their heritage in Iowa. We wish to highlight the stories of all Iowans. Bring a story to share.

Voices from Iowa Farm Women at the Iowa State Fair

From August 12 - 22, 2004, WFAN and the Iowa Farmer's Union will be showing *Voices from Iowa Farm Women*, Cynthia Vagnetti's Iowa Humanities project.

Cynthia has created a 15-18 minute video and traveling photo exhibit to engage the public in dialogue on the role of women in American agriculture. This project will give Iowa farm women the opportunity to tell their own story in this pivotal moment in the historic transformation of American agriculture. Their stories include the pressures of finding off-farm wage work at a living wage, of leaving farms, and of losing community vitality. The project will also feature how women are creating successful alternatives to conventional farming practices, while others find new self-worth and fulfillment in off-farm careers.

The booth at the Iowa State Fair will be on the second floor of the Agriculture Building. During the fair, women visitors who stop by the booth will be given the opportunity to record stories

of their Iowa farm experiences. Volunteers at the booth will be on hand to facilitate this activity.

On Saturday August 14th, there will be two public presentations: 11-12 and 2-3 on the ground floor of the Agriculture Building. A panel that includes participants in the development of the project and several of the farmers will discuss issues of women in agriculture as well as answer questions from the audience. Dorothy Schweider, Iowa State Historian, will be present to place the contemporary experiences of the farm women in an historical context of Iowa agriculture.

The Iowa State Fair will be celebrating its' 150th birthday during August. *Voices from Iowa Farm Women* will add to the celebration by honoring women's legacy and heritage.

The Iowa farm women are: Cindy, Madsen, Audubon; Jan Libbey, Kanawha; Laura Krouse, Mt. Vernon; Susan Zacharakis-Jutz, Solon; Virginia Moser, Vinton; Amy Miller, Cresco; and Jeanette Ryan-Busch, Iowa City, IA

Growing People and Community

by Stacey Brown

The Story County Hunger and Nutrition Coalition (SCHNC), in partnership with other community organizations, is planning and implementing a local community garden this summer in Ames, Iowa. Residents of Eastwood Village Apartments, Mid Iowa Community Action, the Healthy Food Voucher Program, Iowa State University, Wheatsfield Grocery, Beyond Welfare, Inc., SCHNC and Story County Master Gardeners have teamed up to create a community garden and provide gardening and nutrition education.

Positive Enhancement of People (PEP), a resident leadership group at Eastwood Apartments, is committed to helping enhance the environment of their low-income housing neighborhood. They are excited about the opportunity to have the community garden at Eastwood because they know that community gardens are good for growing food and also for growing people.

In general, community gardens are used for growing plants or animals and have been collaboratively created and maintained by members of the public. They can be on public or private land and can involve a broad cross-section of the public such as neighborhoods or more specific sectors such as school gardens. The American Community Gardening Association website <www.communitygarden.org> contains useful information on community gardens around the country and even a guide to starting your own community garden. The benefits of community gardening are:

- Beautifies neighborhoods by creating aesthetically pleasing green spaces
- Produces nutritious food such as fresh fruits and vegetables
- Reduces family food budgets by providing a cheaper source of fresh foods
- Conserves resources by decreasing the number of pathways that food must pass through before reaching the consumer
- Creates opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education

The partners hope that the garden will strengthen relationships within the apartment complex as well as the greater Ames community. Learning about food security, nutrition and sharing responsibility for the physical environment are also goals of this project.

Currently sixty families, including sixty children, live in Eastwood. The PEP committee was created in 2003 and is comprised of six Eastwood residents and supported by the property owner and Beyond Welfare, Inc. In the past, they have received a grant for playground equipment. The garden is another avenue to further their goals of creating a better community for all families in Eastwood Apartments. Eastwood youth took part in a focus group last year where they said they wanted a pond, a playground, flowers, and a garden for their neighborhood. The Eastwood Community Garden will contain a children's garden and hopefully, in the future, a small pond.

Ground breaking for the garden took place at the end of March and planting will continue throughout the summer with the help of Master Gardeners.

Community gardens exist all across the country creating a community garden spirit. Eastwood residents have come together to plant and weed. They are becoming excited about the approaching harvest. True social change can begin with growing food because through food we can grow relationships and better people.

Healthy and Humane

(Market, continued from page 1)

French style market cart with striped awnings and custom made wheels.

Rose and Larry Mason and Ron Muth of One Stop Meat Shop of Sioux City barbecued free-range bison sausage and did a land office business with their locally raised and processed meat products. All One Stop Meat Shop producers raise their animals on pasture using humane practices.

"We had music and massages and fresh flowers and crafts and lots of cool stuff," said SFFS Board Member and HSUS activist Penny Fee of Sioux City. "Kathy Hughes and I have dreamed of having a place where we could buy food raised locally in a way that respects our concern for health and the humane treatment of animals. The Floyd Boulevard Local Foods Market is that place. It's what we call 'Values Added Agriculture'."

"The Floyd Boulevard Local Foods Market represents an historic beginning in Iowa," said Chris Bedford, "For the first time consumers can choose 'humanely raised animal products' along with 'organic and naturally raised fruits and vegetables'. Ultimately, consumers are the ones who will bring about the change in farm animal welfare we seek. In Sioux City, consumers and farmers are working together to transform local agriculture. It is very exciting."

"Several of my friends came down to the market and just hung around because there was so much positive energy," said Cancer Center Nutritionist and SFFS Secretary Cindy McClary of Sioux City. "We can do this. We can build a better future together."

The Floyd Boulevard Local Foods Market will be open every Saturday through Halloween. Wednesday evening hours will be added in June. A year-round market will open in the Fall.

For more information contact Chris Bedford at <cbedford@hsus.org>.

(Chris Bedford, National Campaign Coordinator for Farm Animals and Sustainable Agriculture of the humane Society of the United States and member of WFAN.)

The Internship Program of WFAN

by Cassi Johnson

WFAN's internship program is off to a great start this summer and is stronger than ever. An anonymous donor has provided funding for four women interns to work on WFAN member farms and one intern to work out of the WFAN office coordinating the intern program and learning non-profit management. Although WFAN has provided limited funding for interns in the past, this "boost" of financial support will allow WFAN to formalize the internship program and build a strong foundation for the future of this vital program.

Goals for the Program

Matching women interns with women farmers serves several goals that are central to WFAN's mission. First, women are leading the way in building a sustainable agriculture that provides healthy food for communities. The internship program provides the opportunity for women interested in farming to gain the experience and knowledge necessary to become the newest leaders in this movement.

Second, as the average age of farmers in the U.S. is steadily rising, internship program provides young women with the opportunity to explore their interest in farming and become the next generation of farmers.

Finally, as Nan Bonfils, a farmer-participant in this summer's intern program points out, "Many hands make light work." The intern provides an extra set of hands (and eyes and ears) at the peak of the farmer's season, helping support the innovative work of WFAN's farmers. Mentoring also provides the farmer the opportunity to build leadership skills.

Introducing the Interns

Who, then, are the women interns and farmers charged with meeting these worthy goals? An internship committee solicited applications through the WFAN listserve, and letters were sent to WFAN member farmers. Four interns were chosen to work on three farms and one intern was chosen to work in the WFAN office as the internship coordinator. Let me first introduce myself, Cassi Johnson,

as the new internship coordinator. I will be working with Denise O'Brien this summer to formalize the internship program, create a database of potential interns and farmer-mentors, and to build relationships with Iowa universities and

The internship program provides the opportunity for women interested in farming to gain the experience and knowledge necessary to become the newest leaders in the sustainable agricultural movement.

community colleges so that future interns can receive college credit for their experience. I am excited about working with farmers and interns this summer and working toward growing the internship program for next year and the years beyond. Please contact me at cassi@ias-tate.edu if you have any questions or suggestions about the program-I would love to hear your comments.

Nan Bonfils of Full Circle Farm will be working with intern Liz McMillan this summer. Full Circle Farm is a diversified farm including a natural beef and lamb enterprise with some vegetable production. Nan has many years of experience in organic vegetable production. Nan says she hopes that her mentoring experience with Liz will be one of "co-learning" in which the women can share in each others' unique knowledge and skills. Liz is determined to make a life in farming-a path she knows is a difficult one-and she hopes that this internship will add to her experience and knowledge as she negotiates that path.

For intern Kate Jacobsen, her work this summer with Perry-O Sliwa of Sliwa Meadow Farm will allow her to gain

experience not only in sustainable agriculture, but also in sustainable living. She brings to her internship a desire to learn, a desire she states "is rooted in a deep love of the land and a commitment to living a sustainable life during [her] short presence on this earth."

Kate will be working and living at Meadow farms, helping to raise and market vegetables, fruits, flowers, and honey products. Kate hopes to someday manage her own organic, diversified farm, and she feels that, in addition to knowledge and experience gained through her work, the internship will also build her confidence in becoming a sustainable farmer in a society that undervalues its food producers.

Susan Zacharakis-Jutz will be working with two interns who bring very different goals and life experiences to their work on Local Harvest Farm this summer. Through her coursework and internship experiences at Grinnell College, Anne Jumonville has learned and taught others about issues of sustainable agriculture and sustainable development both here in the U.S. and in Nicaragua. She views her internship with Susan as a chance to put into practice her political convictions, to "participate in the actual work of maintaining a sustainable living practice," and to utilize and apply the things she has learned through her college education.

Rachel Ann Hein comes to Local Harvest Farm after a career working with sustainability issues. Through her work as Art Director for a Seattle-based renewable energy non-profit, as well as volunteer work for organizations promoting urban gardening, youth gardening, local food systems, and community food security, Rachel realized she wanted to become a farmer. She is now returning to Iowa to the land where she was raised in order to follow this dream, and she feels her WFAN internship will help her on this path.

You can look forward to reports on interns' and farmer-mentors' experiences in the fall newsletter and at the WFAN summer gathering and the Fall Harvest Gathering.

Jan Libby: Master Farmer

by Denise O'Brien

Jan Libbey operates One Step at a Time Garden with her husband Tim Landgraf. Jan has been an active member of WFAN and Iowa Network for Community Agriculture and a long time advocate for direct marketing.

What is the name of your farm and what do you grow there?

Jan: One Step at a Time Gardens. We grow a diverse array of garden vegetables, herbs, raspberries, pasture-raised poultry. I use the phrase "Raising healthy food...raising hope" in our materials.

Where is your farm?

Jan: The farm is located in north central Iowa - southern Hancock County - right across from beautiful East Twin Lake - a natural glacial lake with upland woods.

How did you get interested in farming?

Jan: Good question for a city gal. One thing has led to another and another and low and behold we find ourselves farming. While my husband, Tim Landgraf, grew up on a farm, I only dreamed of it. When I was young, I wanted a horse - I knew nothing about farming. My natural resource background provided the envi-

ronmental framework for paying attention to Iowa's rapidly changing agriculture in the early 1990's. An interest in social justice piqued my attention for the social dynamics of Iowa's rapidly changing agriculture. My personal desire to develop a rich connection with place - our community in terms of farm, surrounding natural landscape, and variety of people - has fueled a passion for rural community vitality. My goal to find life work with my life partner, Tim, finds us blending our various skills into our farm work. Mix it all together and we find ourselves farming.

Did you take agricultural studies in college?

Jan: My degree is in fisheries and wildlife biology with a bent on education

Do you have a family and do they help you farm and market your products?

Jan: Our family consists of my husband, Tim, our two children Andrew (15) and Jessica (12) and our dog, Lion. Everyone helps and has their unique role.

Have you encountered any barriers over the years you have farmed?

Jan: Location, location, location. We are market challenged here in north central

Iowa, and labor—this is always a challenge for this labor-intensive farming.

What do you like best about farming?

Jan: It's very creative and tangibly productive.

What advice do you have for someone interested in farming?

Jan: Pay attention to market first. Pay attention to your overall goals, your skills and who and where you can find the necessary blend of skills to succeed. Plan, critique, revise, plan some more.

What do you think the future holds for farming?

Jan: I think community-based farming is an incredibly hopeful dimension of agriculture as it is rooted in so much more than farming itself. I think there is a lot of work on these three primary fronts: market development, eater education, producer capacity. This is good work, but it will require persistence, creative thinking, and fresh approaches to partnering and organizing and continually building leadership capacity.

We have a number of ideas about the direction(s) we would like to take our farm - getting the basic infrastructure further developed is our first step. I see us moving into these other aspects in the next 5-10 years.

Cuba Caravan Headed for the Midwest

by Briana Harris

In June and July, the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO)/Pastors for Peace will sponsor travel for hundreds of volunteers from the United States and seven countries to Cuba on the 15th Friendship Caravan to Cuba. Since 1992, Pastors for Peace has delivered more than 2,350 tons of urgently needed assistance to the Cuban people without seeking a U.S. Treasury license as an act of civil disobedience against the blockade of Cuba.

In this election year, the Bush Administration has virtually eliminated "people to people" exchanges with Cuba and utilized the "homeland security" budget to investigate those suspected of travel to the island. In recent weeks the Bush administration has escalated its actions against Cuba. Among the many

measures announced by the administration are:

- Cuban-Americans are to be limited to one visit every 3 years to see their families in Cuba.
- The U.S. propaganda stations Radio and TV Marti are now to be beamed into Cuba from special U.S. military aircraft which will fly close to Cuba.
- The U.S. is to give more money to groups in Cuba who oppose the current government.

The 15th Friendship Caravan publicly challenges these policies and the unpopular economic blockade as it traverses thirteen separate routes across the country. Caravan members will be welcomed by 120 U.S. communities that have collected over 60 tons of humanitarian aid for the people of Cuba. Two hundred people along with school buses,

computers, medicines, and school supplies will be picked up along the routes and will converge at the U.S./Mexico border to travel to Cuba.

Since its founding, Pastors for Peace has taken a critical look at U.S. policies in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. It offers support when the policies are consistent with the Judeo-Christian ethic, and offers alternatives when they are not. All too often, our own government impedes the healthy development of our neighbors to the south. When this is the case, the organization defines an alternative - the "People's Foreign Policy."

Pastors for Peace believes that democracy entails responsibility. History is full of travesties that result when citizens abdicate their responsibility. Our respon-

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sibility does not end at our borders. As citizens of the most powerful nation on earth, we have special obligations. The most important work of Pastors for Peace is here at home where they educate citizens about the realities of our southern neighbors and the impact of our government's policies. This does not mean a responsibility to charity, which can create unhealthy relationships of dependence. It means a responsibility to justice—political, social and economic.

The caravan will be driving through many states at the end of June and beginning of July. Pastors for Peace is still looking for people interested in joining the caravan and for support as they come through each city. One does not need to be a pastor or clergy to participate. Pastors for Peace is an ecumenical project based in the religious community and includes activists from all sectors of society. Anyone who works for peace with justice is a "pastor" for peace. If you live in or near one of these cities and would like to know more about the caravan event that is being planned or if you would like to join the caravan please contact Pastors for Peace at 212-926-5757 or email cucaravan@igc.org.

Schedule for the Midwest

June 23: Fargo, ND

June 24: Minneapolis MN, Madison WI

June 25: Rochester MN, Milwaukee WI

June 26: Lincoln NE, Ames IA, Des Moines IA, Oak Park IL, Detroit MI, Ann Arbor MI & Cleveland OH

June 27: Omaha NE, Iowa City IA, Chicago IL, Greenwood IN, Yellow Springs OH

June 28: Lawrence KS, DeKalb IL, Bloomington IN, Louisville KY, Columbus OH

June 29: Wichita KS, St. Louis MO, Berea KY

June 30: Oklahoma City OK, Memphis TN, Nashville TN

July 4: All routes converge in McAllen TX for orientation

July 7: Border crossing and travel to Tampico, Mexico

July 9: Depart Tampico for Cuba

July 19: Return to Texas

Coordinator's Corner

The summer season is approaching rapidly, and by now most people have their gardens in and are tending to the weeds. Of course, those of you who have CSAs continue to plant, weed, harvest and sell your produce all summer long and into the fall. Most of us are wondering when the rain will stop.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) has brought a new type of farming to Iowa and the United States—a good number of WFAN members are CSA growers. This newsletter features Jan Libbey of One Step At a Time Gardens. The WFAN summer meeting will be held near Jan's farm on July 23-24. Jan and I have worked on several projects over the years. It will be a pleasure to be on her farm with her family.

Jan and I have been working on planning the summer meeting for the past couple months. We have developed an agenda that will surely meet our needs. We plan to have a session on the local food systems that Jan does in her rural region. We will also have time to enjoy nature. Jan and her husband Tim along with their children will be hosting an Iowa Network for Community Agriculture (INCA) Field Day so those of you attending the WFAN meeting can stay and learn about worm composting.

In this issue, you can read about the efforts for local food systems in the Sioux City, Iowa area by WFAN member Chris Bedford of the Humane Society of the United States. WFAN wishes Chris

the best of luck creating more markets for locally grown Iowa products.

There is an article in this issue I wouldn't want any of you to miss because it has been written by my daughter Briana Harris. Briana is busy organizing and recruiting people to join the Caravan to Cuba that will take place during the last part of June and first part of July.

Through the generous support of an anonymous donor, WFAN is able to support four interns on WFAN member farms and an intern in our office this summer. Cassi Johnson will be working to help formalize the internship program. She will be researching ways to garner support for this program as well as ways to provide academic credit.

WFAN will also be hosting a Life in Iowa student, Stephanie Anderson from Harlan, Iowa. Stephanie will be contributing ten hours per week as a part of her community service work. Her paid employment is with the Southwest Iowa Planning Council in Atlantic.

In closing I would like to say that working outside on my farm helps me forget the tragedies and atrocities that are happening in this world today. Being in the sun and doing manual work give me the energy to work on social justice issues be they about food, world peace or a clean environment. I hope that everyone has a summer that meets all expectations. It is a wonderful and alive time of year.

More Women Become Operators of Iowa Farms

(taken from an article in the Gazette, by Marlene Lucas, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, February 05, 2004)

As the number of Iowa farms continues to decline, women are playing an increasing role as primary operators.

Iowa had 90,634 farms in 2002, down from 96,705 in 1997. The average size of a farm was 350 acres in 2002, up from 334 acres.

Women who were principal operators of farms totaled 6,186 in 2002, up from 5,101 in 1997. A total of 28,136 women were operators in 2002, compared with

99,154 men, according to the 2002 Census of Agriculture...

Many of the female farmers grow specialty crops, while others run farms their husbands once managed, said Ron Bosecker, administrator of the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

More than half the Iowa women farmers are over 55.

More rural demographic details: Iowa's farmers are growing older, with the average age of farm operators at 54.3 in 2002, up from 52.3 in 1997.

**Women, Food
& Agriculture
Network**

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