

# Women, Food & Agriculture Network

## A Year Older is a Year Wiser: Lessons Learned



by Heather Johnson

I hope that I can always hold on to the attitude that aging is not something to be mourned as the passing of youth, but celebrated as the building of knowledge and wisdom. That's why I am pleased to look back over the last year and consider what I learned.

### What I Learned in My First Year of Farming:

- **Accept the sacrifices you have to make to do what you love.**

When I first moved to the farm I took a job in town to tide me over until I got settled and fully involved in the family farm. I was confident that freedom from all town employment would soon be mine. Slowly but surely my attitude has changed. I realized that I am lucky to have a job that allows me time off to farm and a flexible schedule. I want to enjoy every part of my life and not wish time away, waiting for the time when everything is "perfect." Instead of resenting the idea that I have to work in town, I have accepted it as part of my life right now - if someday I am able to support myself solely with self-employment, great!

- **Attitude is everything.**

The only thing that retained my sanity during harvest was my ability to stub-

bornly cling to the idea that I liked farming, that I loved to work outside, and that I enjoyed learning how to fix machinery. Not only did the wet weather delay our harvest, but it made the corn and soybean plants extra tough, causing nearly daily breakdowns with our aging combine. Through it all I found myself occasionally frustrated, but never overwhelmed and I took comfort in the idea that harvest will probably go better next year. All of this was possible because I mentally prepared myself for the challenge and set my mind that I would keep a positive outlook.

- **Confidence is a state of mind.**

The idea of hauling loads of grain to town is now passe' instead of terrifying. I like to be in control, and I don't like people to know that I need help, or don't know what I am doing. My preference is for running the combine rather than hauling loads to town. Initially this started because, as I was fond of saying, "if I screw up in the field there will be only one or two witnesses, but if I screw up at the elevator, everyone will know." I'm less afraid of what others think, and I now prefer combining to hauling loads. I love seeing what I have accomplished with each swath of the combine and find the trip to and from town tedious.

(A Year, continued on page 3)

### Mission

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



## Calendar

**April 9, 2005: 2nd Omaha Peace & Justice Expo**, 1-6 pm, Lewis & Clark Middle School, 6901 Burt St., Omaha, NE.

**June 16-18, 2005: Second National Farm to Cafeteria Conference: Farms and Food Services in Partnership.** Gambier, Ohio (45 minutes east of Columbus) at Kenyon College. Plenary Speakers: Marion Nestle, author of *Food Politics* and David Kline, author of *Great Possessions: An Amish Farmer's Journal*. Workshop tracks include: Farm to School 101, Digging Deeper Into Farm to Institution, Agriculture Education for Everyone, and Policy issues from the School Board to Congress. Sponsors include the Community Food Security Coalition, Center for Food & Justice, Farm Aid, Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association, Food Routes and Kenyon College. For more information: <[www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)>

**June 20-24, 2005: Rethinking Development: Local Pathways to Global Wellbeing.** St. Francis Xavier Un., Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada Visit conference website: <[www.gpiatlantic.org](http://www.gpiatlantic.org)>

**July 29-30, 2005: WFAN Summer Meeting** will be held near Solon, Iowa. Susan Jutz and friends will be the hosts. For more information, email Denise O'Brien, <[cowfan@metc.net](mailto:cowfan@metc.net)>

**October 6-9, 2005: Community Food Security Coalition's 2005 Annual Conference.** Atlanta, GA. The conference will feature over 40 workshops, networking, field trips and skill-building sessions, local food and culture. A call for workshop proposals will be available in late February. The conference brochure and on-line registration will be available in June. For more information see: <[www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)>

**October 21-23, 2005: The 2005 Women in Sustainable Agriculture Conference.** Burlington, Vermont. (see story at right)

**November 11-13, 2005: Sixth annual Fall Harvest Gathering for Women in Sustainable Agriculture.** Good Earth Village, Spring Valley, MN. Mark your calendars! More information will be available soon.



## Women in Sustainable Agriculture Conference

The 2005 Women in Sustainable Agriculture Conference: A Celebration of Hope and Opportunity, will be held October 21-23, 2005 in Burlington, Vermont. The two and a half day national conference will honor the role of women in agriculture, celebrate the power of women's networks to create change, and plant the seeds for future work. Francis and Anna Lappe will be the keynote speakers with Pamela Kingfisher wrapping things up at the conclusion of the conference. There will be many opportunities to capture your imagination; workshops to engage your hands and minds, art to delight your spirit, networking to stimulate your creativity, activities to nurture the child within and locally grown food that celebrates the bounty of the season. Registration information will be available in mid-2005. For more information or to find out how you can be involved, visit <[www.uvm.edu/wagn/womeninag.html](http://www.uvm.edu/wagn/womeninag.html)>, <[www.wfan.org](http://www.wfan.org)> or email <[wagn@uvm.edu](mailto:wagn@uvm.edu)> or <[cowfan@metc.net](mailto:cowfan@metc.net)>

## Opportunities

### Growing Your Small Market Farm

May-Oct.—One-On-One Assistance as Needed

Nov.-Dec.—Group meetings

A business planning program supplemented with:

- a. Accountant Software and Training
- b. Institutional Visits
- c. Marketing Material Development
- d. Become a Network Member

For more information contact: Penny Brown Huber at 515-289-0238 or <[BrownPennyL@aol.com](mailto:BrownPennyL@aol.com)> or Sherry Shafer at <[krisa@iastate.edu](mailto:krisa@iastate.edu)>

## 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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Sept 2005 issue: August 25, 2005

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# U.S. Agricultural Policy and the Budget

by Alexandra Spielloch, U.S. Gender and Trade Network

We already know that rural communities everywhere are experiencing the terrible impacts of failed farm policy. This policy reinforces a U.S. agricultural trade agenda favoring agribusiness companies through selective subsidies, low commodity prices, and global food dumping.

As the report “*Re-thinking US Agricultural Policy: Changing Course to Secure Farmer Livelihoods Worldwide*” writes, “the government [has] abandoned historic market stabilizing tools in favor of ‘decoupled’ programs and trade liberalization.” It also states that “despite large increases in taxpayer-provided farm payments, net farm income declined 16.5 percent between 1996 and 2001.” While some small and medium farmers do receive a share of government farm payments, these subsidies do not adequately compensate for losses incurred from low commodity prices.

## Subsidies Support Corporate Farmers

Family farms in the U.S. and around the world have long declared that subsidies support corporate farming over sus-

tainable livelihoods. The political influence of agribusiness and increasing concentration in the food industry have sacrificed healthy farming in the name of export-led production.

Bush’s Budget Proposes Cuts President Bush’s controversial budget recently presented to Congress proposes cuts in farm subsidies nationwide by \$587 million. The proposed budget includes a five percent reduction in support payments and a ceiling of \$250,000 on payments to individual farmers, down from \$356,000 prior. Most small and family farms would be largely unaffected by this shift in policy, but corporate hand-outs (particularly to rice and cotton farmers) would be somewhat curtailed.

However, the reality is that cuts in corporate subsidies will only be significant if they are coupled with price controls that guarantee farmers in the U.S. and around the world a fair price for their goods. In order to achieve these fair prices, many are calling for a global commodity body to promote supply management and farmer-owned food reserves, rather than subsidies that keep prices low to guarantee profits for corporations.

The Bush administration will have a major fight on its hands as members in Congress take on his proposed budget cuts. It remains to be seen what the agricultural budget will look like after Congress has ripped it apart. Women farmers in the U.S. have been experiencing the negative impacts of these policies on their livelihoods for some time. Now is the time to get involved in local and national coalition work to raise our voices in identifying alternatives which will ensure that family farms do not die out in the U.S.

# A Year Older is a Year Wiser: Lessons Learned

(A Year, continued from page 1)

## ● Mechanical ability is best learned out of necessity.

I’ve always loved tinkering, but never put it to a real practical purpose until I was let loose with a piece of equipment and had all day to run it without any assistance. When I faced breakdowns I was unable to handle on my own, there were many days where my dad talked me through the repair over the cell phone from his office in town. While I still have only a fraction of the knowledge my dad and uncle have about machine repair, I am catching up with my patience and willingness to try to figure out a solution besides “whacking it with a hammer,” which is a perennial favorite of my dad’s.

## ● Expect the best from others.

I have decided to expect others to respect me, to take me seriously as a farmer, and to not discount my abilities just because I am a woman. While I started the year overly sensitive about being taken seriously as a female farmer, I see now that people will either accept me for what I am, or they won’t. Being suspicious and defensive certainly did not help my case, and I found that I was missing out on opportunities to connect with others in my community.

(Editor’s note: Heather Johnson came to our Fall Gathering several years ago. She talked about wanting to farm with her father. In the spring of 2003, she entered farming and in Volume 7, Number 1 March 2004 issue of the WFAN newsletter and talks about that experience.)

## Newsletter to Go Electronic

The next newsletter for the Women, Food and Agriculture Network will be sent electronically to those who have paid membership dues for 2004/2005.

We are trying to cut costs! It is also an incentive to those who are not now paying members to become one. On the back of this newsletter, there is a form to fill out and send in to become a member.

WFAN is a leading organization in bringing women to the table. In order for us to gain strength and participate more fully in the world of sustainable agriculture, we need to increase our membership.

Please join us today to remain connected.

*I have decided to expect others to respect me,  
to take me seriously as a farmer,  
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# Seeking Healthy, Humane, Homegrown Options

by Amy Freiburger

As Midwesterners we live in the midst of abundant corn and soybean fields to help “feed the world” and provide “cheap food.” What can we eat from corn and soybeans? Originating from an organic dairy farm nestled in Northeast Iowa, I find myself pondering this question frequently. In the quest to “feed a starving world” and provide the “cheap,” highly subsidized, commodity crops, citizen consumers lose sight of healthy, humane, homegrown options. In reality, your choices in the marketplace have the most significant impact on farm animal welfare and environmental stewardship.

## Foods in Your Local Grocery

Imagine being in your local grocery store, scanning up and down the array of aisles planning the week’s meals for your family. Naturally we care about their health, yet many times this can take the backseat to the bottom line shelf price. Depending on where you shop, the leading grocery stores tend to offer a large variety of junk food (loaded with carbohydrates) and highly processed items to extend shelf life and increase profit margins for food processors and agri-businesses. Take some time to read the ingredient labels on several of these foods. Most often, you will see high fructose CORN syrup and hydrogenated SOY-BEAN oil listed in great amounts on the label.

Let’s look further into the supply side of our complex food economy. The corn suitability rating determines the worth of farmland. With the increasing cost per acre to rent or purchase farmland, entering agriculture remains difficult for anyone, especially young people. Agriculture has become increasingly consolidated and vertically integrated.

## The Family Farmer

Where does the independent, family farmer fit into this scheme? How does this relate to farm animal welfare? First, all animals must be tended with utmost attention to their daily needs regardless of weather conditions, family vacation, or times of distress. Families involved with their

farming operation tend to take the best care and management of their farm animals. They see the future and legacy of working with the land and ensuring every need of an animal is given proper care.

Secondly, how can we be supportive of our farming neighbors striving to stay afloat during these trying times in agriculture? As citizen consumers, we all must consider the ethics of eating and how our purchases have an effect on farm animal welfare and environmental stewardship. Grocery shopping can turn from a chore to a scavenger hunt in search of produce and animal products raised with values embracing the humane treatment of animals, organic production methods, or locally produced items reducing fossil fuel inputs. You can find these items at places other than the grocery store in the Midwest. Look to your area farmers markets, food cooperatives, or local farmers participating in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) enterprises.

## Look at the Labels

To verify the products are raised in accordance with your values, look for labels in the grocery store. Pay particular attention to labels on beef, chicken, and poultry. Be scrupulous. There are misleading claims and many times our choices are limited to those raised under intensive confinement conditions. Specifically look for “Free Range,” “Cage Free,” “Hormone Free,” or “Grass Fed” options. Niman Ranch and Wholesome Harvest are well known Midwest brands adhering to a high ani-

mal welfare standard. In search of dairy products, look for only those organic items where cows are allowed to pasture, labeled “produced without antibiotics, synthetic hormones or pesticides.” In particular, look for a pledge rejecting the use of recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH). This genetically engineered drug is injected into dairy cows to increase milk production, but causes several adverse health problems for cows and poses potential health risks to humans. Organic Valley and Stonyfield Farms are two notable Midwest brands that fervently stand behind the humane treatment of animals.

These brands carefully track their product from farm to table. They also encourage customers to contact them through their website and offer feedback about agricultural practices.

## Talk to Your Local Farmer

Reach out to your farmer and ask about the treatment of their farm animals, if chemicals were sprayed, or hormones were used. Share your ideas with these family farmers; your discussion will fuel a change and farmers will be happy to embrace a new market once the benefits are acknowledged and profits foreseen.

Making these choices when purchasing groceries sends a direct message, that you DO NOT choose to support these animal conditions and you stand behind a more humane, sustainable agriculture. Sometimes, these purchases may require more from your pocketbook to cover the real cost of agriculture’s impact on the land and animals. Your food purchases promote a more humane agriculture; I think of this as my contribution to family farms much like my own.

*Amy Freiburger is with the Humane Society of the United States focusing on building local food networks, supporting sustainable agriculture, and building awareness about how animals and produce are raised in harmony with nature. She attended Iowa State University and originates from an organic dairy farm in Northeast Iowa. Feel free to contact her with questions at <afreiburger@hsus.org> or 515-283-0777.*

## Resources

Resources for finding healthy, humane, homegrown options in your area:

**Eat Wild:** <[www.eatwild.com/products/index.html](http://www.eatwild.com/products/index.html)>

**Local Harvest:** <[www.localharvest.org/](http://www.localharvest.org/)>

**The New Farm:**

<[www.newfarm.org/farmlocator/index.php](http://www.newfarm.org/farmlocator/index.php)>

**Iowa Network for Community Agriculture:**

<[www.growinca.org/food.html](http://www.growinca.org/food.html)>

**Eat Well Guide:**

<[www.eatwellguide.org/viewall.cfm/prmOrgType/13](http://www.eatwellguide.org/viewall.cfm/prmOrgType/13)>

# Learning from Cuba But Left with Questions

by Cassi Johnson

I have been intrigued with Cuba since I began to study sustainable agriculture during my undergraduate program in Geography. Cuba seems to have become something much bigger than just a country and its people; it is a battleground for clashing political, economic, and social ideologies. Depending on who you listen to, Cuba is either a nation stricken by poverty, human rights abuses, and a lack of democracy, or, alternatively, it is a country that has forged an alternative, progressive path and as a result has strong human welfare indicators and is at the forefront of the sustainable agriculture movement.

In November of last year, I had the opportunity to see Cuba with my own eyes. I participated in a sustainable agriculture study tour led by Agricultural Missions, Inc., a non-profit organization with a mission of “fostering coordination of thought and action among agencies engaged in the rural missionary enterprise.” Along with a group of fifteen other activists, pastors, farmers, teachers, and leaders, I toured a diversity of farms, urban gardens, and cooperatives. We also met with leaders from sustainable agriculture, rural development, and social justice organizations and participated in group dialogues with our marvelous hosts at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center in Havana.

Like any truly valuable experience, I left my study tour with more questions than answers. I'll share with you some of the experiences from my trip that touched me the most and some lessons learned:

## Surprising Beauty

First, I can't believe how beautiful Cuba is! This may sound silly, given that it is a Caribbean island and has been a popular tourist destination for a century, but I have always thought of Cuba in terms of its political, social, and economic structures. I was astounded by the variation in the landscape as we drove in our big yellow school bus from Havana into several

rural provinces. The lush, steep slopes of the tower karst formations in Viñales were especially breathtaking. I was also surprised by the abundant presence of public art in Havana's urban landscape. It seemed like each time I turned a corner there was a new painting, sculpture, or public performance to enjoy.

## Practical Agriculture

Second, I found Cuba's approach to solving problems in the food and agriculture system refreshingly practical. For example, one farm we visited was attached to a theological seminary. The director of the seminary explained to us that the school's leadership began the farm when they realized they could provide their students healthier food at a lower cost if they grew it on site.

Another urban gardening project we visited provided food for the school next door. The farmer there explained to us that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba had to rely on food that could be produced with the nation's own limited resources. Meat, then a staple in the Cuban diet, became less readily available, while a plethora of fresh vegetables could be easily raised with few inputs, even in cities. Unfortunately, many Cubans had neither a taste for

says most Cubans now incorporate a variety of fresh vegetables into their diets.

In the U.S., our efforts to build a more just, sustainable food system are bogged down by farm policy, food safety regulations, and the interconnectedness of our agricultural system to the international economy. Cuba's isolation from the world economy has created agricultural and food security problems, but I believe it has also enabled Cubans to find creative, practical solutions to these problems from which we in the U.S. can learn a lot.

Another common sense approach to farming I witnessed in Cuba is their respect for farmers. Farming is a well-respected occupation in Cuba and is therefore compensated at a higher rate than many other jobs. Several farmers told us “Of course farmers are paid well-producing food is such an important job!”

## Ideological Confusion

Finally, I left Cuba confused about the leftist rhetoric surrounding the country—and surprised to find these feelings within myself. Many progressives in the U.S., Canada, and Europe hinge their hopes for an alternative, non-capitalist development path on Cuba's “experiment.” This was clear in the comments of several of my colleagues, who expressed their hope that Cuba does not succumb to capitalism once the embargo is lifted or when Castro dies. I, too, believe that there has to be a better system than the one imposed on the world by the western nations. In Cuba, though, I experienced a case of “Northern guilt.” I questioned my right to wish an alternative path upon Cuba's people, when there were signs all around that they did not wish that path for themselves.

One of our hosts at the Martin Luther King Center said that many Cuban youth want the clothes, cars, and electronics

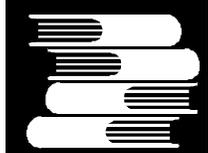


fresh vegetables nor the knowledge to prepare them. A massive public education campaign was launched to teach people how to select, prepare, and enjoy fresh vegetables. The farmer, who said he too had to learn to enjoy vegetables,

(Cuba, continued on page 6) 5

# “But Still Try — For Who Knows What Is Possible”

## Book Review



### **Bringing the Food Economy Home: Local Alternatives to Global**

**Agribusiness** by Helena Norberg-Hodge, Todd

Merrifield and Steven Gorelick: Zed Books, 2002. ISBN: 1-56549-146-7, 140 pages.

### **Civic Agriculture: Re-connecting Farm, Food and Community**

by Thomas Lyson, University Press of New England, 2004. ISBN: 1-58465-414-7, 136 pages.

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

“But Still Try - For Who Knows What Is Possible” — Michael Faraday

Like most science majors at Ursinus College, I read these words inscribed above the doorway of Pfler Hall as I entered for biweekly tests and all-consuming finals. Few of us, even today, could identify Faraday by his portrait, but almost all of us have found that his value of simply plugging away at one's calling in the face of an uncertain future applies equally well to the student struggling to pass organic chemistry or the adult attempting to make a living by “non-traditional” means - especially those of us called to organic gardening/sustainable agriculture.

## The Similarities

Although *Bringing the Food Economy Home* and *Civic Agriculture* were published two years apart, the history they chronicle — the rise of global agribusiness, its stunning success in economic terms, its hidden failures in ecological, food safety and rural life issues and the current rise of an “agriculture of place” or “civic agriculture” to remedy those failures — is pretty much the same. Both books explain how the Industrial Revolution accelerated a trend to transform agriculture from a locally-sufficient economy based on home-produced goods and services traded with neighbors to a few cash-based commodity corporations

dependent on maximum profits for stockholders. Both books also explain the farmers' markets, community supported agriculture (CSA), “buy local” campaigns, community gardens, food co-ops and other local structures that have arisen to counter the concerns many have with the current corporate global food system.

## The Big Picture

For those who prefer the really big picture, *Bringing the Food Economy Home*, written by International Society for Ecology and Culture (ISEC) staffers based in the UK, concentrates on the global implications of a corporate food system and provides examples from both First and Third World countries. While several US essays are included, many of the photos, charts and accompanying stories explaining familiar concepts are from sources that will be new to most US readers. The book also includes extensive endnotes, a decent index, a chart of US and UK measurements and a resource guide of organizations to consult or join.

## Agriculture and Civic Capital

*Civic Agriculture* is part of the Tuft University series Civil Society: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. The focus, therefore, is more on US social history and how community-based agriculture increases social capital. As Lyson, the author, is based at Cornell University, he provides an excellent historical context on how Northeast growers, who traditionally sold their products in local urban markets, have been able to resist somewhat (relative to the Midwest and far West farmers and ranchers) the pressures to “go corporate” and in the current century, preserve their land by embracing CSAs, farmers' markets and other forms of civic agriculture.

And yet, buried beneath the earnest arguments about how growers and consumers alike can prosper through local food systems, both books admit that all these local efforts are barely making a dent (between 2 to 4% of food industry revenues) in global agribusiness' economic clout and access to power to maintain that clout. As Lyson states:

“Civic agriculture does not currently represent an economic challenge to the conventional agriculture and food industry and it is unlikely to pose a challenge anytime soon. However, it does include some innovative ways to produce, process and distribute food. And it represents a sustainable alternative to the socially, economically and environmentally destructive practices that have come to be associated with conventional agriculture.”

In other words, to those of us who strive to make a living in sustainable agriculture: “But still try, for who knows what is possible.”

*(Review copyrighted by Dorene Pasekoff)*

## Learning from Cuba

*(Cuba, continued from page 5)*

they see on American T.V. and hear about from their Miami relatives. He felt that there is a lot of frustration with Cuba's political and economic situation, especially among those young people who were not alive prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, a time when Cuba was much more prosperous. Two friends from the trip went to a movie theater in Havana to see “The Motorcycle Diaries,” which is about a young Che Guevara's cross-continental motorcycle trip. When Che Guevara appeared on-screen for the first time, many of the young people in the audience booed. Che is a figurehead of the revolution, and their contempt of him must also mean that they are contemptuous of Cuba's revolutionary path.

## “We Have Achievements...”

Rita, one of our hosts at the Martin Luther King Center, said she wanted us to come home and tell the truth about Cuba. “Do not say we are a paradise,” she said, “but we have achievements, and a great respect for the people of the U.S.” I don't know what to think about the tension I feel between admiring Cuba's achievements and feeling that my opinion as an American doesn't really count. I do believe, however, that Americans can learn a lot from Cuba's achievements.

## Coordinator's Corner



### **Congratulations to WFAN Coordinator Denise O'Brien!**

by Cassi Johnson

In the past two months, Denise has been presented with two awards honoring her life's work of sustainable agriculture and social justice activism.

Denise was presented with the 2005 Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI) Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award at the annual PFI conference, held January 14-15 in Des Moines. This honor is awarded annually to recognize individuals whose work has helped foster a more profitable, environmentally-sound agriculture in Iowa. Denise was honored for work as a pioneering organic farmer, her leadership during the farm crisis, and her role in co-founding and leading WFAN.

On February 5 the Atlantic Chamber of Commerce presented Denise with the Athena Award, an honor aimed at recognizing women for their professional excellence and community service. Denise was selected for speaking on behalf of rural women around the world for the past 30 years as well as her volunteer work in her local community. The Athena Award is sponsored nationally by the Athena Foundation, and is presented in cities across the nation by local chambers of commerce. The award itself is a beautiful hand-crafted bronze statue.

These awards are a great achievement for Denise, and for all of us women in sustainable agriculture. Even mainstream organizations are beginning to recognize the leadership women are providing in building a more profitable, environmentally sound, and just agricultural system. Let's give Denise a hand and ourselves a pat on the back!

What a busy time this winter has been! I always look forward to the slow down that winter brings, but it usually ends up being a much busier time than I expect. I tend to forget that winter is the only time when you can get most folks to meetings and conferences. The Practical Farmers of Iowa conference had a great agenda filled with workshops and hands-on learning. It is always a great time to see friends and acquaintances and catch up on what is going on in their lives.

At the end of January, I was the guest of the Innovative Farmers of Ohio and Director Laura Ann Bergman. INFOH is housed at the Stradford Ecological Center near Delaware, Ohio. I had the honor of addressing approximately forty women farmers who are embarking on a program called, Growing Together: Central Ohio Women in Agriculture. You can go to the website that explains the program -

[www.ifoh.org/WomeninAg.html](http://www.ifoh.org/WomeninAg.html). We spent a wonderful evening together sharing our lives. During the evening everyone viewed the "Voices of Iowa Farm Women" video. The time together was filled with hopes and dreams and of utmost importance - good food. Women around the United States are gathering together to help change the face of agriculture. From what I have observed, it is going to happen!

After the meeting in Delaware I was

picked up by Mary Steinmaus and her husband Mike. Mary is a founding member of WFAN and it was a pleasure to see her. She lives in southeastern Ohio and works for Rural Action. I spent time with women in Mary's part of the state as well. How refreshing it is to witness determination and success in seeking ways to make a living from the land. Entrepreneurship is alive and well in Ohio.

The highlight of my winter so far is having the Iowa Network for Community Agriculture (INCA) annual meeting in my part of the state. "Blazing the White Pole Road - from farm... to fork... to fitness" brought people together to talk about our children's nutrition and how it relates to local food production. Nutritionists, food service professionals, farmers and dieticians discussed how to implement a more nutritious diet for our school children and to support local farmers at the same time. As the sustainable agriculture and local foods movements mature it is important that we create more opportunities to support a growing number of sustainable farms, many of them run by women.

Seeds are starting to be sown in greenhouses and under grow lights in anticipation of the coming spring. May your gardens grow and your lives be healthy with the approaching spring and summer seasons.

### **Member Websites**

WFAN Website	<a href="http://www.wfan.org">www.wfan.org</a>
Abi Hutchinson:	<a href="http://www.prairiefiber.com">www.prairiefiber.com</a>
Maggie and Donna:	<a href="http://www.prairielandherbs.com">www.prairielandherbs.com</a>
Rural Womyn Zone:	<a href="http://www.ruralwomyn.net/">www.ruralwomyn.net/</a>
Susan Houghton:	<a href="http://www.ruralwomyn.net/sustain.html">www.ruralwomyn.net/sustain.html</a>
Liz Garst:	<a href="http://www.farmresort.com">www.farmresort.com</a>
Angela Tedesco:	<a href="http://www.turtle-farm.com">www.turtle-farm.com</a>
Nancy Dundatscheck:	<a href="http://www.showcase.netins.net/web/sacrednaturephoto/">www.showcase.netins.net/web/sacrednaturephoto/</a>
LaVon Griffieon:	<a href="http://www.kfoi.org">www.kfoi.org</a>

If you would like your website on WFAN's website or newsletter, email [cowfan@metc.net](mailto:cowfan@metc.net)

**Women, Food  
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A Tides Center Project  
59624 Chicago Road  
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**Women, Food, & Agriculture Network**

links and amplifies women's voices  
on issues of food systems,  
sustainable communities  
and environmental integrity.

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Membership is either \$30 or \$10 (your choice). Fill out this form and make your check payable to Tides-WFAN. 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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c/o Linda Warren

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Madison, WI 53701-1611

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