

# Women, Food & Agriculture Network

## Heirloom Fruits and Vegetables: Celebrating Iowa's Garden Heritage

by Sue Futrell

The Iowa State Fair is THE place to see prize-winning vegetables, fruits and livestock, and this year Heirloom produce will have its own place in the competition. As part of a project to educate Iowans about the benefits and beauty of heirlooms, there will be new categories for Heirloom vegetables, squash, and apples, as well as tomatoes and flowers in the Horticulture competition. This year's Fair will be held August 11-21 at the State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. Prize-winners will be exhibited in Agriculture Hall. (This is the same building where WFAN's booth was located at last year's fair.)

In the Food category, jams, jellies and preserves made from heirloom fruits, and heirloom vegetables have been added. The project, sponsored by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Practical Farmers of Iowa, and supported by Seed Savers, Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers, Polk County Master Gardeners, the Alces Foundation and others, will let thousands of fair visitors admire and celebrate Iowa's unique and wonderful produce heritage. A display

with resource material on heirloom produce and an education program during the fair are also part of the project.

One hundred years ago, Iowa farmers and gardeners produced food for kitchens and dinner tables across the state. In 1920 at least 34 kinds of crops and livestock were raised on 1% or more of the farms in the state, and Iowa was a major producer of crops such as apples, potatoes, sweet corn and grapes.

By 2002, over 2/3 of those crops had disappeared from commercial production almost entirely, and only corn and soybeans were grown on more than half of Iowa's farmland. As the variety of foods grown locally has declined, Iowa's landscape has changed—more cornfields, fewer orchards—and food travels further to reach our tables—an average of 1500 miles, according to a recent study by the Leopold Center.

In the process much of the variety and unique produce that once flourished here has been lost. Most of the vegetables in the grocery store today come from a few common varieties. Often they are kept in production because they ship and store well, not because they are the best tast-

*(Heirloom, continued on page 6)*



### 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 8-9, 2005: Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society Summer Symposium.** Buses leaving from Seven Clans Casino, Thief River Falls, MN. Friday Tour - Cutting Edge Organic Production Systems Research, Crop Variety Trials, Hosts: Robin & Karen Brekken, Crookston, MN, Jim and Pat Todahl, Fertile, MN, and Faye and Verdell Olson, Fertile, MN. Saturday Tour - Local Foods Systems - Hosts: David Wentworth, Gonvick, MN, Erik & Karen Mallea, Gully, MN, and Dean & Howard Hanson, Gully, MN. Call 701-883-4304 or 883-5205 or visit [www.npsas.org/Upcoming.html](http://www.npsas.org/Upcoming.html) for schedule and driving directions.

**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: A Celebration of Hope and Opportunity.** Burlington, Vermont. Farmers, ranchers, growers, service providers, educators, activists, and all those who care about food, fiber and the natural world will honor the role of women in agriculture. Speakers, workshops, art, and networking to create change. [<www.uvm.edu/~wagn/conferenceataglance.html>](http://www.uvm.edu/~wagn/conferenceataglance.html).

**October 27-28: Midwest Rural and Agricultural Safety and Health Forum: Bridge Building...Research to Practice.** Stoney Creek Inn, Johnston, Iowa. Hosts: Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) and the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health. Help build and strengthen collaborative efforts between researchers, practitioners, agricultural producers and medical professionals.

[<www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash/>](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash/). Call 319-335-4224.

**November 1-2, 2005: Risk Management Agency Midwest Regional Conference.** Des Moines, IA. See: [<www.rma.usda.gov/calendar/2005/november.html>](http://www.rma.usda.gov/calendar/2005/november.html)

**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.

## Field Days

**Laura Krouse, Abbe Hills Farm**  
**Wed. July 27: East Central Iowa**  
**825 Abbe Hills Road, Mt. Vernon**  
**52314. 319-895-6924, [LKrouse@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:LKrouse@cornellcollege.edu)**

Laura Krouse and her workers operate a CSA for nearly 120 families in the Mt. Vernon area. She also raises and sells open-pollinated corn for seed. Laura also teaches biology at Cornell College and is a longtime commissioner of the Linn Soil and Water Conservation District.

**6pm: Garden and wetland walk; 7pm: Scents; 7:30pm: Corn breeding; 8:30pm: Refreshments and visit**

**Directions:** From the intersection of Hwy. 30 and Hwy. 1 near Mt. Vernon, take Hwy. 1 north into town. At the light, turn left and go west to 8th Ave., also called X20. Turn right, and go north out of town 1.4 miles. At Abbe Hills Rd., turn left and go west 1.25 miles. There are two red sheds on the north side.

**Wallace Country Life Center**  
**Thurs. July 28 Southwest Iowa**  
**2773 290th St., Orient 50849**  
**641-337-5019 (Diane Weiland), [haw@mddc.com](mailto:haw@mddc.com)**

The Henry A. Wallace Country Life Center is the birthplace homestead of Henry A. Wallace, U.S. Vice President, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, founder of Pioneer Hi-Bred International, writer, scientist, and humanitarian. The 40-acre historic site consists of the birthplace home, the new Gathering Barn meeting place, a restored prairie, woodland, pond, outdoor art sculptures, walking trail, and the Prairie Harvest CSA, an organic vegetable and fruit garden.

## 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:

Sept. 2005 issue: Aug. 25, 2005

Dec. 2005 issue: Nov. 15, 2005

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**4:30-6:30pm: Tours; 6-7:30pm: Local Foods Sampler.**

**Directions:** From I-80, take the Stuart exit, go south on P-28 for 12 miles to Hwy. 92. Go west on Hwy. 92 2.5 miles. Turn south on P-33 (Henry A. Wallace Rd.) for 5 miles to 290th St. Turn west, go 0.25 mile to the Country Life Center. North side of the road.

## **Wright County Food Festival & Market**

**Sat. July 30 North Central Iowa  
11am-2pm, Lake Cornelia Park,  
Clarion 50525; Jan Libbey, 641-495-6367**

Come celebrate food and community with a healthy helping of local food and music. Powered by the I-RENEW Photo Voltaic Cell Traveler. Come experience the power of local connections.

**11am-1:30pm: Local music & food;  
Noon-1pm: All Local Lunch; 1:30pm:  
Sweet Corn Eating Contest**

**Directions:** Take Hwy. 3 east 1 mile from Clarion to R35, turn north on R35 all the way (5 miles) to Lake Cornelia Park. Turn into main park entrance, follow road toward north lake shore area. Activities will be centered around the open lakeside shelter.

## **Sustainable Row Crops, Livestock, and Home Gardens**

**Wed. Aug. 24 Southwest Iowa  
Neely-Kinyon Research Farm  
2557 Norfolk Ave., Greenfield 50849  
515-743-8412 (Adair County Extension office), krohrig@iastate.edu**

Wayne and Margaret Neely donated their farm near Greenfield to the Wallace Foundation for use in research and demonstrations. The Neely-Kinyon Farm is one of several community satellite farms associated with the ISU Armstrong Research Farm.

**Demonstrations; 4pm: Wagon tours;  
6pm: Supper; 7-8pm: Workshops**

**Directions:** From Greenfield, 2 miles south on Hwy. 25, half mile east on 260th St., half mile north on Norfolk Ave

## **The Conservation Security Program at Work**

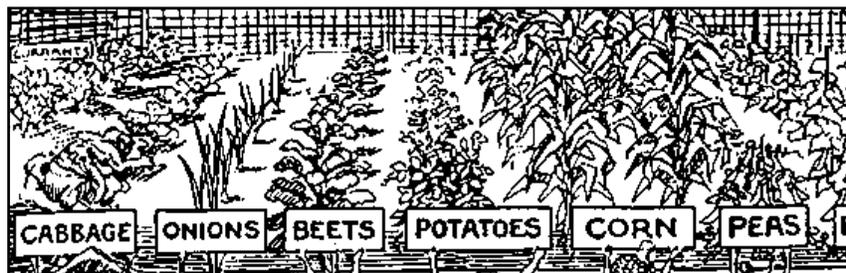
**Thurs. Sept. 8 Southwest Iowa**

**Vic and Cindy Madsen; 2186 Goldfinch Ave., Audubon 50025; 712-563-3044, vcmadsen@metc.net  
2-7:30pm**

Long-time PFI members Vic and Cindy Madsen were among the first to enroll in the Conservation Security Program (CSP) as residents of the East Nishnabotna watershed. The Madsens operate a crop and livestock farm of about 300 acres, employing conservation measures that include permanent pasture, native plantings, delayed haying, and rotation of row crops with small grains and forages. The family grows certified organic corn and soybeans and raises hogs (marketed through Niman Ranch), sheep, and broiler chickens.

**2-3pm: CSP overview; 3-5pm: Field Tour; 5-5:30 P.M. Stewardship payments; 5:30-6:30pm: Light meal of local foods; 6:30-7:30pm: Mini sessions**

**Directions:** From Audubon Co-op, go past the hospital 1 mile south and 2 miles west Turn south on N-16 and go 0.75 mile. East side.



## **ZJ Farm Tour and Celebration**

**Sat. Sept 10 East Central Iowa  
Susan Jutz, 5025 120th St. NE, Solon  
52333; 319-624-3052, zjfarm@ia.net**

The 80-acre farm has multiple operations including: direct marketing of organically raised lambs from a 60-ewe flock; direct marketing of 40 organically raised hogs; on-farm production and direct sales to restaurants, CSA, and farmer's market of homestead cheese from 20 milking does; principal partner and vegetable grower for 80 families in the Iowa City and Cedar Rapids area; and organic crop production for on-farm livestock feed.

**3-5pm: Farm tours; 5:30pm: Potluck dinner; 6:30pm: Square dancing;**

**Directions:** From Solon, 3 miles north on Hwy. 1, 3 miles east on 120th St. Large white house and barns beside road.

Tenting space available.

## **Quality Corn, Crop Breeding for Farmers**

**Sun. Sept 11: Central Iowa  
Full Circle Farm, hosted by Don  
Adams and Nan Bonfils; 1579 P Ave.,  
Madrid 50156; 515-795-3288; 2-5pm**

Nan and Don have been farming their 300-acre operation near Ledges State Park in Boone County since 1993. Half of the farm is in timber and pasture, the balance in crop and forage - in transition to organic certification. Forage-fed beef is direct-marketed to appreciative customers, most within a 30-mile radius. In addition, Nan and Don direct-market firewood, organic vegetables, free-range eggs, and forage-fed lamb.

**Directions:** From Hwy. 30, 3 miles south on Hwy. 17; then about 3 miles west on 250th Street, following signs to the Ledges State Park. Turn south on P Ave. at the Park. Pavement runs out after a half mile; continue a quarter mile on gravel. Please park vehicles on east side of road across from metal building. From

Madrid, go north on Hwy. 17, past Luther, to 250th Street; turn west to the Ledges Park; turn south to the farm.

## **Breeding and Selecting Corn for Quality**

**Tues. Sept 27 Northeast Iowa  
Mike Natvig and Amy Miller  
20074 Timber Ave., Cresco 52136  
563-569-8358, northriver@iowatelecom.net; 1pm**

Mike and Amy farrow-to-finish 400-450 hogs per year on pasture organically. Their beef herd of 42 cows has been in an intensive rotational grazing system since 1988 using prairie-oak savannah pastures. The farm now includes a small-scale vegetable operation. For a number of years Mike has grazed and cropped land on the neighboring Borlaug farm.

## **Demonstrations and Discussions**

**Directions:** From Protivin take V-58 (Willow Ave.) 1-plus miles north and west. Where the highway turns north again, continue west 2 miles on 200th St. to Unity Ave. Field on the northeast corner of the intersection. Look for signs.

## Grazing Workshops in Southeast Minnesota

July 11, 2005 - August 8, 2005

A series of grazing management workshops will take place in southeastern Minnesota this summer with Howard Moechnig, state grazing specialist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. "Profitable Livestock Production by Better Understanding of Pasture Management" will be covered in three-hour sessions either on a farm or at agriculture service center offices. The fee for each is \$10. Pre-registration two weeks prior to each session is required because space is limited.

For locations and to register, call Diana Strain, Hiawatha Valley Resource Conservation and Development, at 507-281-1959, ext. 4. For other information, contact Caroline van Schaik in LSP's Lewiston office by calling 507-523-3366 or e-mailing [caroline@landstewardship-project.org](mailto:caroline@landstewardship-project.org).

The following workshops have been organized:

**July 11: Livestock Watering Systems**, 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

**July 18: Livestock Watering Systems**, 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

**July 25: Strategies for Maximizing Forage Production**, 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

**Aug. 1: Fencing for Livestock/Sensitive Area Identification and Management**, 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

**Aug. 8: Fencing for Livestock/Sensitive Area Identification and Management**, 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

## Volunteers

### State Fair Volunteers Needed

The Iowa Farmer's Union has rented space in the Horticulture Building at the Iowa State Fair. Volunteers are needed to staff the booth from August 11th to August 21st. We will need people for three hour shifts. WFAN collaborated with Iowa Farmer's Union last year to make a successful fair appearance. This year it is hoped that there will be several other sustainable agriculture organiza-

tions that will help fill in the volunteer slots. Contact Leigh Adcock at 800-775-5227 if you are interested in volunteering.

## National Hotline for the Conservation Security Program

**A service for innovative farmers and ranchers helping stimulate good environmental stewardship**

**Call 402.687.2100**

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is a 2002 Farm Bill initiative written by Congress to provide financial assistance to farmers and ranchers who are solving key natural resource and environmental problems by adopting sustainable practices and systems. The CSP was designed by Congress to provide support to farmers and ranchers who are already engaged in strong conservation systems to protect soil, water, air, and wildlife or who will adopt more sustainable systems as part of the program.



The Hotline is important for farmers and ranchers truly committed to improving stewardship, according to Traci Bruckner, policy analyst. "We want to ensure that the farmers and ranchers this program was intended to reward are able to fully access the program."

The Hotline is designed to assist farmers and ranchers with questions regarding how to apply and program eligibility. Eligibility questions will center around the self-assessment that farmers and ranchers will need to complete. This self-assessment can serve as the first hurdle to cross in accessing the CSP and the Hotline will be there to assist farmers and ranchers with this process.

For more information on the Conservation Security Program or the Hotline, contact Traci Bruckner at 402.687.2100 or email [tracib@cfra.org](mailto:tracib@cfra.org)

## WFAN Members Attend International Meetings

### FAO Forum on Sustainable Agriculture, Rome, Italy

WFAN members Carol Smithand and Denise O'Brien participated in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) forum on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) in Rome, Italy, April 10-16. SARD is a result of the U.N. Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 and the Agenda 21, Chapter 14: "Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development." It is the most comprehensive plan on the interlinked challenges of land management to reverse soil degradation, to alleviate poverty, to improve food security, and to promote sustainable agricultural production.

With related chapters of Agenda 21, the SARD framework addresses the policies, programs and partnerships required to advance sustainable agriculture and rural development at regional, national, and international levels. The partnerships include the Major Groups identified in Agenda 21: farmers, indigenous peoples, workers & trade unions, business & industry, non-governmental organizations, women, local authorities, youth and scientists, without whose participation the goals of SARD cannot be achieved.

As Delegates to the Rome meetings Carol and Denise:

- will report back to their organizations and constituencies on the lessons and opportunities for work at the international level, based on meetings with former U.S. Congresswoman Eva Clayton, U.S. Mission, and USDA delegates at FAO, and their international civil society counterparts
- will develop linkages to like-minded participants from developing and other developed countries to facilitate partnerships for collaborative work.
- will contribute to a summary document to the U.S. domestic family farm, community food security, food and social justice movements.

*(continued on next page)*

● will bring their perspectives from the international experience into the policy initiatives under debate and development in the U.S. as they are related to the Farm Bill.

The National Catholic Rural Life conference supported the travel, lodging and participation fees for Denise and Carol to the Rome meeting. Dorothy Barker represented the Rural North Carolina Coalition at the meeting.

### **Meeting on Science and Technology. London, England**

Denise left Rome early to join Mary Hendricksen at a meeting of the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD).

Denise and Mary were nominated to be representatives to the IAASDT meeting by Pesticide Action Network of North America. IAASTD is a unique three-year collaborative international effort to evaluate agricultural knowledge, science, and technology (AKST) and the effectiveness of public and private sector policies and institutional arrangements in relation to them.

IAASTD assesses AKST in relation to the development and sustainability goals of:

- Reducing hunger and poverty
- Improving nutrition, health and rural livelihoods
- Facilitating social and environmental sustainability

The project is a major global initiative, developed out of a consultative process involving 900 participants and 110 countries from all regions of the world. Mary will contribute as an author to the final document that will be produced.

Opportunities such as these give Women, Food and Agriculture Network the honor of representing women in sustainable agriculture in the United States.

## Iowa: The Land of Opportunity

By Kristen Corey

I want an Iowa where the green grasses flow freely,  
Where the sun shines brightly,  
Where the wind sweeps across the plains,  
Where the soil soaks up the nectar of the clouds.

I want an Iowa where "community" includes more than a town,  
Where people can stroll out onto the streets to talk to their neighbors,  
Where children can roam gaily with Popsicles in hand,  
Where friendliness is a way of life.

I want an Iowa where building a house means building a home,  
Where neighbors get involved in your daily affairs,  
Where your brother lives one block south of your house,  
Where your sister lives one block north of your house.

I want an Iowa where young and old work together toward a common goal,  
Where the imagination is allowed to run free,  
Where new ideas are embraced,  
Where acceptance is bred plentifully.

I want an Iowa that is not afraid of change,  
But yet also holds its own when under siege.

I want an Iowa that entertains these concepts and more...

Iowa, to me, is the land of opportunity.

*Kristen Corey was an intern with Women, Food and Agriculture Network in 2002. She participated in the Life in Iowa program. A recent Iowa State graduate, she is currently enrolled in graduate school in Sociology.*

# The Organic Grassfed Beef Coalition

by Angela Jackson

At a time when organic beef is taking off and demand exceeds supply, a pool of livestock experts are working together to create a system that provides a consistent supply of high quality U.S. organic grass-fed beef with exceptional flavor and tenderness to retailers.

The Organic Grassfed Beef Coalition (OGBC) was recently assembled as a team of producers, researchers, educators, and organic beef livestock specialists in the production of organic pastured beef in the northern plains. Collaborating with major universities and research farms, they hope to conduct trials and submit grants for further study of grass-fed beef livestock systems including the economic and environmental benefits.

In Spring 2005, OGBC moved toward becoming incorporated as a non-profit organization in South Dakota. OGBC evaluates the whole system of organic grass-fed beef from producer to retailer.

The OGBC team is working on a sys-

tem that offers a better premium to the producer, promotes grassland and pasture preservation, educates the supply chain, and conducts research for building a valuable US organic grass-fed beef product through a “collaborative learning” team approach. In the course of its research, the OGBC committee revisited long-standing practices and historical theories about the nature of successful organic grass-fed beef production and placed that knowledge in context with modern organic grass-fed beef practices.

We hope that the result of our work will advance the current knowledge in at least two respects. First, it offers a comprehensive perspective of “scientifically-based” beef livestock education and methods for producers who are increasingly interested in improving organic meat standards, value, and practices. Second, the research shows that, within the diverse methods of organic beef practices, researchers who often disagree along philosophical and methodological lines nonetheless share much common

ground. This valuable work should therefore be useful for the whole supply chain.

Current projects being conducted privately are for researching and cataloguing data on grass-fed genetics, disease and pest resistance, and retention of grasslands. An upcoming project will use Rotokawa genetics from New Zealand to research and catalogue increase in gains, meat tenderness, and flavor.

The OGBC is also planning on writing collaborative grants to private foundations for value-added programs to promote and preserve small, rural farms in the Northern Plains. Organic production is a perfect fit for smaller operations that generates a good living for the farmer through organic pay premiums.

Be sure to visit the OGBC online at <[www.organicgrassfedbeef.org](http://www.organicgrassfedbeef.org)>.

*(Angela Jackson-Pridie is a member of WFAN and President of the OGBC. She is a graduate student at the University of South Dakota and co-owner of Pridie Farms, a Iowa Learning Farm project in transition to organic.)*

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## Heirloom Fruits and Vegetables

*(Heirloom, continued from page 1)*

ing, most nutritious, or most beautiful. Old-fashioned varieties—with names like Washday peas, Long Pie pumpkin, Box-Car Willie tomatoes, and Hog Sweet apples are tucked away in a few carefully-tended gardens, treasures to be savored and shared with grandchildren and neighbors. Today they’re often referred to as heirlooms.

Heirloom fruits and vegetables are plants and seeds that have been handed down, sometimes for many generations, within families and communities. Most commercial seeds are hybrids bred for specific characteristics, and do not reproduce reliably from year to year, meaning farmers and gardeners must purchase new seeds each year limited to the varieties the seed company makes available. Heirloom seeds can be saved after each harvest and replanted, keeping these unique varieties alive and available.

the wonderful varieties of heirloom fruits and vegetables is a simple joy with profound implications. Learning the stories of family and community associated with plants and seeds handed down from year to year; relishing the shapes, colors, flavors and abundance of those old-fashioned gardens is a joyful contrast to the pale, uniform fruits and vegetables that often fill our grocery stores. And these simple pleasures also hold valuable benefits for the future of food and farming.

Biodiversity—maintaining a wide array of seed, plant and livestock varieties—keeps our plant and animal kingdom strong and adaptable.

Variety meets specific needs of local communities—often with distinct characteristics that help them flourish in a particular region or complement a traditional diet. The many varieties of heirloom plants may hold the key to disease resistance, climate adaptation, medicinal properties and many other qualities

Iowa-grown heirloom fruits and vegetables can still be found on farms and gardens throughout the state and are beginning to make a comeback.

Muscadine melons, old-fashioned apples and unusual varieties of tomatoes, potatoes, squash and garlic are still around, showing up at farmer’s markets,

One of the best resources for seeds and how to save and propagate them is the Seed Savers Exchange, Heritage Farm and Visitor Center in Decorah, Iowa. For information, to order seeds, or for a listing of stores that carry Seed Savers seed packets, visit their website <[www.seedsavers.org](http://www.seedsavers.org)>. You can tour their beautiful gardens and learn about their work at their Visitors Center and Heritage Farm near Decorah.

Information about the Horticulture and Food contests is on the Iowa State Fair website at <[www.iowastatefair.org](http://www.iowastatefair.org)>, or request a copy of the premium booklets by writing or calling the Fair office: Iowa State Fair, PO Box 57130, Des Moines, IA 50317. Tel: 515-262-3111.

*(WFAN member Sue Futrell is the project coordinator for Celebrating Iowa’s Garden Heritage. For more information about the project, she can be reached at: One Backyard, <[sfutrell@mchsi.com](mailto:sfutrell@mchsi.com)>, 319-337-7770.)*

# Changes Afoot

by Stacey

The year 2005 has so far been one of reflection and change for WFAN. Our organization is in its 8th year and facing a challenging financial period. WFAN staff and board members are strategizing about how to maintain our programs, newsletter, and listserv while also raising funds to secure the future of the organization.

At the same time, however, WFAN's work has never been more relevant and in demand. Executive Director Denise O'Brien published an Op-Ed piece earlier this year in the Des Moines Register about the Women, Land, and Legacy Program and the unique challenges faced by women landowners. Emails and calls soon poured in to WFAN from women across the state who were eager to share their stories about land ownership and learn more about our organization. WFAN is also helping organize the first ever national Women in Sustainable Agriculture Conference in Burlington, Vermont in October.

Perilous news headlines about childhood obesity and environmental degradation, as well as positive stories about innovative farm-to-school partnerships and young people entering farming, all serve to reinforce the important work we do every day as an organization with a diverse membership.

WFAN's staff and board are committed to continuing the organization's vital and innovative work. In January, member (and new board member) Sue Roberts hosted a fundraising retreat for WFAN board members and friends. It helped us to understand what we need in order to successfully move forward. One of our main goals for the summer is to create a strategic plan that will frame where we want to go and show potential funders that we have a sustainable future. Denise and I are working with fundraising consultant (and incoming board member) Penny Brown to build on the momentum from the retreat in January and develop a strong fundraising plan.

WFAN's board is also undergoing changes. I would like to welcome incoming board members Pernell Plath, Sue Roberts, Sue Futrell, and Penny Brown,

# Coordinator's Corner

by Denise O'Brien

Summer is in full swing with the continuous planting and harvesting of those wonderful foods we have been waiting for all winter. There can be nothing finer than those first sprigs of asparagus, the wonderful wild tasting Morel mushrooms, the crispy radishes and the leafy lettuce that are now on our plates. It seems like it will take forever for those tomatoes, potatoes and corn to mature. Food security is having the space, ability, time and desire to grow one's own food. If that is not possible then food security is having access to farmer's markets, CSAs or the fresh produce section of your grocery store that carries locally grown products at prices that are affordable and yet keep people on the land.

I attended a conference in April where the keynote speaker asked the question "How can you talk about homeland security without talking about homegrown security?" This man definitely had a point. Many of you who work on issues of food security have asked this same question. Would it not be better to have a decentralized food system that is regional in nature where the food is grown by many farmers and is not transported thousands of miles before it gets to people's plates? Will the country's leaders ever be convinced that the cost of fuel is not going to go down and that a food system less dependent on fossil fuel transportation is desperately needed?

LaVon Eblen and Sarlynn Heston. Each of these women brings unique skills and experiences to the board and we sincerely appreciate their commitment to our organization. At WFAN's summer board retreat, July 28-29 at Prairiewoods near Hiawatha, Iowa, we will create an action plan for the coming year. Monique DiCarlo, from the Women's Action Resource Center at the University of Iowa, has agreed to facilitate a board training during the meeting.

Along with welcoming new board members, we have formed board committees to increase board involvement with the various activities of WFAN. These committees include: Advocacy and Education, Fundraising, Internship

Will those leaders ever understand that sending youth off to war to fight a battle over oil is sacrificing thousands of lives for short term goals and that money would be better spent on developing alternatives?

Recently I had the privilege to attend meetings at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization headquarters in Rome, Italy. As I met with people and discussed issues of sustainable agriculture and rural development, I was struck by the fact people from all nations of the world were working on issues of sustainability. As I listened through earphones to the translations of the official meetings of the Committee on Agriculture, I was amazed that these delegates, leaders in their own countries, speaking many different languages, were concerned about the sustainability of agriculture and of the rural areas of the world. I could only hope that in my own country we would be able to say words like sustainable, organic or entrepreneurship without folks rolling their eyes or yawning.

I wish a productive summer to all. Remember to take a rest when rest is needed. It is easy to do too much and to feel burned out at the end of the day, week or summer. Enjoy the produce of the season and give thanks to the plants and animals and to all those people willing to produce the fine food we are privileged to put on our plates.

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Program, Women Landowners, Communications, and Finance. If you are interested in serving on a committee, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would love to increase our member involvement in all of WFAN activities.

This is a crucial time for WFAN as we move into the future. The board is working hard to make sure that we will be around for many years to come. We thank all of you as members and supporters of WFAN for partnering with us to get women's voices heard on agricultural and environmental issues. Women, Food and Agriculture Network would not be the same without you. Together we will move forward to make change in our world.

**Women, Food  
& Agriculture  
Network**

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

**Women, Food, & Agriculture Network**

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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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