

REAL FOOD, FARMS AND MARKETS

Defining Sustainable Agriculture for the 21st Century

NOFA-NY's 19th Annual Conference

January 12-14, 2001

Sheraton University Hotel & Conference Center
Syracuse, New York

Introduction to the 19th Annual Conference

The short definition of sustainable agriculture is an integrated production system that is environmentally sound, economically viable and socially responsible. The two-day conference is packed with workshops, opportunities to mingle and build alliances with like-minded people and organizations. Workshops will include what farmers are doing in each of these areas to move towards more sustainable production.

We will explore how we can work with and learn from the growing number of farmers who define themselves as sustainable farmers but do not use the "o" word. How can we deal with labor issues when farm prices are based on wages to laborers below a living wage? As petroleum and natural gas costs increase, where do we stand on sensible incorporation of energy efficiency into production practices and marketing? And what food safety issues do all farmers face and what can we do about them?

More Opportunities to Interact

We are trying something different this year by holding our conference at a hotel. The idea is that this will give people staying at the hotel an opportunity to talk with each other, building the relationships we need for better communication and a stronger, wiser organization. We are also lengthening meal times and making sure the group gets together once a day.

Workshops work when participants are active, strong voices. Think about it. Your questions and creative ideas on how to tackle a problem that you or others may be facing helps the presenters and participants move forward towards solutions. Please join us for an exciting time when we can build on the strengths in our community.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 12, 2001

6 P.M. REGISTRATION & A CHANCE FOR DINNER WITH NOFA-NY GOVERNING

COUNCIL

7:30 P.M. FRIDAY EVENING

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

FOOD, FARMS & NUTRITION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Dr. Michael Hamm

Dept. of Nutritional Science, Rutgers Univ.

Former president of NOFA-NJ

An insightful speaker with information, thoughts and ideas about where we stand in on nutritional gains in relation to farm production, the changing nature of farming in the Northeast, and organic agriculture on the eve of federal regulation.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 2001

9:00 A.M. - WORKSHOPS - SATURDAY MORNING

BEST SEASON: WHAT WORKED in 2000 on DIVERSIFIED VEGETABLE FARMS

We've had it all - the drought of 1999 followed by the cold wet summer of 2000. It was surprising to hear some say in September that they were seeing record yields that went into October. Others were still in tears. These farmers and others will discuss what they did and why think their production methods worked so well.

Jay & Polly Armour - Four Winds Farm (Hudson Valley)

Scott Chaskey - Quail Hill Farm (Long Island)

Stu McCarty - Whistle Stop Gardens (Binghamton)

ON-FARM CONSERVATION OF HEIRLOOM VARIETIES

Preservation of plant varieties by farmers on the farm is recognized by governments as a sensible complementary approach to conservation in gene banks. This type of preservation hopes to encourage continual evolution of the crop in its natural environment and is a dynamic conservation. Germplasm for seed propagated crops in the United States and most other countries is preserved long term as seed maintained in cold storage. The objective of on-farm conservation is preservation of static populations that do not change. Join Dr. Larry Robertson, Plant Genetic Resources Unit (PGRU), Geneva, NY to discuss how you can help with the task of characterizing the 6000 or so varieties of tomatoes or other crops in the Geneva, New York PGRU collections. This would be the first step in selecting germplasm from the national gene bank useful for your markets. Growing these varieties on your farm in a natural environment would allow continued evolution of the crop. A roundtable discussion will follow covering issues in characterizing germplasm, selection of varieties for on-farm conservation and the techniques for small-scale seed production and processing.

Larry D. Robertson, Vegetable Curator, Plant Genetic Resources Unit, USDA-ARS, Cornell University, Geneva, NY 14456

Philip L. Forsline, Horticulturist and Curator for Apple and Cherry, Plant Genetic Resources Unit, USDA-ARS, Cornell University, Geneva, NY 14456

David M. Sharman, Farm Manager, Plant Genetic Resources Unit, USDA-ARS, Cornell University, Geneva, NY 14456

REGIONAL IDENTITY MARKETING EFFORTS

Local marketing means everything from selling directly from the farm to selling wholesale to a major supermarket chain in your area. Many efforts have been aimed at increasing awareness of family farms through regional marketing efforts. What has been tried and does it work? These panelists

will discuss efforts in NYS and programs from around the country.

Moderated by Glenda Neff, NY Farms! Exec. Director

Michael Sligh - RAFI - Successful efforts from around the country

Les Hulcoop, Dutchess Co. Coop. Ext., Hudson Valley Harvest

Tim Pezzolesi, Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty Tim Pezzolesi

☐ 1000 CHICKENS - 200 AT A TIME

Quality, farm-raised poultry seems to be in demand. At King Bird Farm, in their fourth year, they decided to add chickens to a diversified vegetable & herb farm, and will discuss time, costs, equipment and return on 1000 certified organic chickens. Jim McLaughlin will discuss farm-based production systems around the state.

Karma & Michael Gloss, King Bird Farms, Tioga Co.

Jim McLaughlin, So. Central RC&D, production systems around the state.

☐ PERSONAL EXPRESSION IN GARDENS

Over the years, Lisa has planted many herb and flower gardens around her home and farm, including the Smiling Garden (which she sees from her kitchen window), the "Where I'm At" garden, (which gets additions of plants), a double-dug teaching garden for school groups, a perennial garden and more. Join her for a discussion of how plants and gardens can be an important and changing expression of many sides of a person.

Lisa Wujonvich, Mountain Dell Farm, Delaware Co.

☐ 5 CENTS PER HUNDRED WEIGHT - A DAIRY PROGRAM WITH DIRECT RETURNS TO FARMERS

Five organizations banded together in Pennsylvania last year to pilot the Chesapeake Bay Sustainable Milk project, where milk from farms meeting water quality management plans was sold at a higher price, with 5 cents of that extra price going back to the farmer. Now, a group in

Cortland County is examining the possibilities of the program for their area.

Lori Sandman, Dir., Chesapeake Bay Sustainable Milk 1 Year Pilot

Amanda Barber, Dir, Cortland Co. Soil and Water District and coordinator for CLEAR (Cortland League for Environmental Agricultural Responsibility)

10: 45 A.M. - KEYNOTE SPEAKER - MICHAEL SLIGH

☐ WHERE ARE WE GOING & HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Sustainable agriculture and the organic community - moving forward together? Michael Sligh, Sustainable Agriculture Director for RAFI, the Rural Advancement Foundation International, RAFI, based in North Carolina, will be our keynote speaker. He is a former organic farmer, and currently sits on the National Organic Standards Board, the UN/FAO Codex Food Labeling Commission and board of the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association. He is a founding member of key groups, including the 50 member Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture and National Family Farm Coalition.

12 NOON - LUNCH

1:15 P.M. - WORKSHOPS - SATURDAY AFTERNOON

☐ ON-FARM YOGURT & CHEESE PRODUCTION

Full-time uncertified organic farmers, Barbara & Steve Smith, milk 15 jersey cows. They hold a raw milk dealers license, sell raw milk from the farm, and make Meadowsweet yogurt, kefir, cheddar, brick and havarti raw milk cheeses. The value-added products are sold at the Ithaca farmers'

market and Greenstar Coop. This couple bought an abandoned farm 5 years ago and has been improving their pasture through grazing management, keeping inputs to a minimum. The workshop includes time, equipment, costs and return for a value-added product made on the farm.
Barbara & Steve Smith, Meadowsweet Farm, Lodi, NY

□ INTERN EDUCATION THROUGH FARMER COOPERATION THE C.R.A.F.T. MODEL.
The Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training has been a model for farmer-run intern training programs in the Northeast. Two of its initiators will explain how the program has developed, how it currently works and how the farm group shares the task of training interns for their future farming careers. Current and former interns as well as other farmer participants will be on hand to give the audience their perspective as well.
Elizabeth & Sam Smith, Caretaker Farm, Williamstown, MA

□ COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES
County governments seem to have taken their support away from cooperative extension offices and some have moved to fund agricultural economic development activities. If your county doesn't have something going, or needs a little direction, there are a number of interesting examples of county-level activity worth considering. Otsego Co. Kevin Hodne, former county legislator and CADE Exec. Dir., a grant-funded organization that has gotten some amazing grants, including a meadow-raised meats project, and pharmaceutical organic herb project. He will discuss their local IDA revolving loan program for farmers and ag. economic development and other ways Otsego Co. has gotten county agencies involved in farming support.
Wayne Co. Agricultural Economic Development. Specialist - Ora Rothfuss will share what his newly created position has allowed the county to pursue in the way of ag. economic development projects.

□ WHY ORGANIC METHODS ARE WORKING - Recent Research
Soils are the key to the secrets of organic production, and with the help of organic farmers, Dr. Larry Phelan is documenting the mechanisms of organic production in the scientific literature. Of special interest is insect resistance in organic systems. He considers organic farmers his mentors and will describe what he has found in carefully controlled field experiments, as well as discuss with participants their observations.
Dr. Larry Phelan, Dept. of Entomology, Ohio State University

□ BORROWING MONEY FOR AN AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISE OR BUYING FARMLAND -
The Business Plan that gets you the money. Lenders need a showing that you have made money farming and that you can make more money farming based on your future plans. But how does this all look in black and white? Come find out and bring your questions to an agent who is very supportive of the organic community.
Joanne Crosman, USDA Farm Service Agency, Wyoming & Livingston Co.

□ ENGAGING YOUTH, FARMERS & PEOPLE IN LAND GRANT PROGRAMS- Initiatives from Rutgers, the New Jersey Land Grant college. Urban-farm connections, organic student farm, youth farm stand selling Jersey Fresh produce, undergraduates teaching in elementary school classrooms - these are just a few of the programs where Rutgers is reaching out into the community to engage people in agriculture.
Dr. Michael Hamm, Dept. of Nutritional Science, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

3:00 P.M. - WORKSHOPS - SATURDAY AFTERNOON

☐ PARTICIPATORY PLANT BREEDING FOR FARMERS & GARDENERS - CONCEPTS MODELS & PITFALLS

Plant breeding has historically been a process of selection by farmers for characteristics important to them. Heirloom (or landrace) varieties, selected by growers over the centuries, are stable populations of plants with characteristics we treasure. Participatory breeding, where farmers are again involved in the plant breeding process, has been developed into a methodology used by plant breeders working in the developing world, which is applicable here. Models used and lessons learned in the development of participatory breeding and issues concerning its implementation in the Northeast will be discussed. Afterwards there will be a roundtable discussion about possibilities, issues and concerns with participatory breeding. A roundtable discussion with audience participants will follow. This workshop is for accomplished growers interested in breeding new varieties through selection.

Dr. Larry Robertson, Vegetable Crops Curator at the USDA ARS Plant Genetic Resources Unit, Geneva, NY, will cover the different models

developed, some successes and failures, some pitfalls and finally how to apply participatory breeding to vegetable crops from the PGRU.

Dr. Phillip Griffiths, Dept. of Horticultural Science, Cornell University, cabbage and other cole crops and snap bean breeder will discuss the principles of crop improvement essential for non-professional breeders learning on-farm techniques

Dr. Molly Jahn, Dept. of Plant Breeding, Cornell University, with expertise in the genetics of disease resistance breeding, and vegetable breeder, will participate in the audience roundtable.

☐ MID-SEASON CHANGES TO MAKE A PROFIT AT YEAR'S END

Meeting Weather Challenges by literally changing production. In June, Paul & Sandy Arnold were down thousands of dollars in farmers market

sales because of the cold, wet start of the season. They didn't wait to find out whether they would be short at the end of the year, but made

some production changes and decisions that have meant that they had an average year with regard to income.

Paul & Sandy Arnold, Pleasant Valley Farm, Argyle, Washington Co.

☐ CSAs & COOPERATIVE MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Community Supported Agriculture is growing, and farmers interested in starting a CSA often come from areas where CSAs are already established. CSA shareholders become interested in a wider selection of farm products, including fruits and meats. The panel below will explain how CSAs in their areas work together and bring more farm products into CSAs. This workshop is really about cooperative marketing of CSAs themselves and the distribution challenges of getting small farm products to interested customers. Come with creativity to share.

Tracy Frisch - 9 county CSA Day in Albany area - August '00

Ulster Co. multi-CSA brochure - Marsha Chio

Columbia County CSAs & Farm Product Additions - Marcie Shemaria

Dick deGraff - Supplying blueberries & asparagus to multiple CSAs

☐ FROM ON-FARM MILK BOTTLING to HILLCREST DAIRY

Mike Janas sold his cows a year ago to go into processing full time.

This small milk processor in Cayuga County is developing markets for

hormone-free milk. Dairy farmers may want to check out this market niche as an alternative or learn what it takes to become a local or regional small-scale processor.

Mike Janas, Hillcrest Dairy, Moravia, NY

☐ ORGANIC FERTILIZERS - HOW SOIL AMENDMENTS CAN AFFECT NUTRIENT AVAILABILITY

Plants use the nutrients in the soil based on their availability, which is affected by a variety of factors. Join this workshop to find out what the latest research has to say about organic soil amendments and what you need to know to ensure nutrient availability. After years as a researcher at Rodale, Dr. Drinkwater joined the Cornell staff this Fall.

Dr. Laurie Drinkwater, Cornell University

☐ 2002 FEDERAL FARM BILL, STATE LOBBYING - WHY & HOW FARMERS SHOULD GET INVOLVED

Sustainable agricultural programs are decided at the federal level, but what gets funded is decided by what our congressional officials hear from us. At the state level, there are opportunities to impact state programs and funding as well. What is on the front burner for the 2001 legislative session in the minds of our elected officials and what do you think should be? How can you personally get involved?

Liana Hoodes, National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, Pine Bush, NY

Kelly Flegel, Exec. Dir. New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

4:45 p.m. NOFA-NY Annual Meeting - ALL ARE WELCOME

6:00 p.m. RECEPTION

6:30 p.m. BANQUET DINNER

8:00 p.m. DESSERT & ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: BEYOND ORGANICS - A PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderated by Elizabeth Henderson

For many people involved in organic agriculture, life style and farming choices have been made to uphold more than just ecological farming practices. For others, the struggle to farm organically is more than enough of an ethical contribution. For still others, organic production methods describe only the beginning of a much more extensive discovery of the biological processes at work in nature. Join us for a lively debate geared to provoke some debate on where we might be headed in the future.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2001

8:30 A.M. - WORKSHOPS - SUNDAY

☐ GENETICALLY ENGINEERED CROPS - What are the latest developments in the technology, the status of legislation related to labeling, the New York State moratorium on planting GE crops and other activities around the

state, country & the world.

Judy Roylance - Long Island NOFA-NY Chapter

Eric Bradshaw, Groundscore

Andy Zimmerman, NYS Biotech News

☐ SHIITAKE MUSHROOM PRODUCTION

Seven years after beginning to grow mushrooms, Miriam Straus's clients now include many of Dutchess County's high-end restaurants, including the Culinary Institute of America. This small-scale backyard certified organic mushroom operation yields mushrooms and profits that fit into the lifestyle of a mother with three young children.

Miriam Straus, Salt Point Shiitake Mushrooms, Salt Point, NY

☐ CHICKEN FEEDS - GRAIN, PROTEIN & PASTURE NUTRITION

Poultry nutritional needs for layers and meat birds is a tough issue for those who are raising certified organic chickens. Or is it? How does access to pasture impact feeding requirements?

This workshop will answer these questions and could raise more.

Dave Mattocks - Fertrell

☐ EFFICIENT HARVEST SYSTEMS ON DIVERSIFIED VEGETABLE FARMS

Efficiency is essential at the Food Bank Farm, a highly diversified organic operation, producing about 40 different crops. The CSA provides for more than 525 shareholders. In addition, 50% of production is donated to the Food Bank of Western Mass. The farm is managed with 2 full time farmers and a staff of 6 seasonal employees. Vegetable handling is in the tons every harvest day.

Linda Hildebrand has co-managed the Food Bank Farm in Hadley, MA for seven years.

Linda grew up on a family farm in the eastern part of Massachusetts, which included vegetable production, orchards, greenhouses and a large roadside stand. Hildebrand is also founding partner in CSAWORKS, which provides technical assistance to CSA farmer and other growers. A number of articles written by Docter and Hildebrand have been published in Growing for Market in Lawrence Kansas.

☐ FARM ACCOUNTING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FARM TAX PROVISIONS HOW TO HAVE MORE \$\$ IN YOUR POCKET AT THE END OF THE YEAR

Farm-savvy bookkeeping can help you in many ways and is one of the keys to financial success in the tough world of self-employment. Our presenter's specialty is farm accounting and she has clients far and wide. In addition to being an enrolled agent, she is a certified financial planner.

Margory Randles, EA, CFP. Randles Advisory Services, Argyle, Washington

10:15 A.M. SUNDAY MORNING KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

☐ OREN LYONS - ONONDAGA NATION - (invited)

We are thankful for the opportunity to hear from a member of the Onondaga Nation about their community and homeland in New York State.

□ H. DAVID THURSTON, CORNELL UNIVERSITY - TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURES AROUND THE WORLD - Valuable sustainable agricultural practices.

11:45 - LUNCH

1 P.M. - WORKSHOPS - SUNDAY

□ 2 YEARS OF KAELIN CLAY USE IN NYS - A Remarkable Pest Barrier
Brian Caldwell - moderator
Several farmers have used kaelin clay to control plum curculio on apples successfully in NYS in 1999 and 2000, two very different years. In addition, it has been used for the control of squash bugs and cucumber beetles on cucurbits. Cornell has also had trials running for two years. Hear about this astonishing physical barrier for pest control.

□ SARE-FUNDED ON-FARM RESEARCH PANEL
Farmers in NYS have gotten many dozens of SARE grants over the years. This year, a few farmers will be presenting their on-farm research, as well as a few stories about how they wrote a winning grant proposal.
Tarnished Plant Bug Control - Karma & Michael Gloss
Phosphorus Availability and Timing of Soil Tests - Klaas Martens
Other Farmer Researchers --

□ SEASON EXTENTION & THE POLITICS OF FARMING
Mark Dunau been making his living with his wife Lisa Wujnovich as certified NOFA-NY farmers for the last eleven years at Mountain Dell Farm. Wide floating row covers are used extensively as season extenders, and are a vital part of planting strategy and the farm's profitability. Following the presentation of season extension, Mark will talk about his experience running for U.S. Senate as the Green Party of New York State's nominee.
Mark Dunau, Mountain Dell Farm, Hancock, NY

□ NEW ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION-LETTING GO OF OBSOLESCENCE
The New Environment Association has for 26 years been involving people in seeking out and taking steps to promote and create a sustainable future. In order to do so, we must learn how to let go of the non-sustainable past. The workshop will explore what this means, and how this letting go might be encouraged and practiced by each participant. Dr. Harry Schwarzlander, engineer, system theorist and futurist. He has been on the faculty of Syracuse University for 30 years and is editor of the New Environment Bulletin, newsletter of The New Environment Association.

□ WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTION INNOVATIONS - NEW OR OLD?
Red Tomato - Progress and learning curve of a three-year effort to get significant local sustainable and/or organic produce into grocery store chains. Next year, Red Tomato will be pioneering super-expedited delivery to stores in order to sell local farm freshness as never before. This is a grower, distributor interactive panel.
Lynn Colangione - Red Tomato, Canton, MA



Dioxin in foods tend to be ubiquitous because they accumulate in plants from ambient air levels. But unlike contaminated water bodies, sources of most dioxins are known and could be eliminated, dramatically reducing the nation's daily intake. E. coli, lysteriosis, mycotoxins are all in the news these days and are being used to argue for and against how food is grown and processed. The up-to-date information provided will help consumers and farmers make informed decisions regarding food choices.



ORGANIC BEEF SALES - SEVERAL FARMERS STORIES
Organic beef producers, both large and small, have been certified by NOFA-NY. Several farmers, including those listed below, will be on-hand to discuss the aspects of production for their mix of farm production.
Marty Broccoli, Coop. Ext. Oneida Co. - moderator
Chuck Blood - Rocky Top Acres -Madison Co. - dairy plus beef sales.
Kate Sweeney - Malven Hill Farm, Chenango Co. - first year with 5 animals on a diversified vegetable & fruit farm.

2:30 DEPARTURE

Food procurement: If you have a donations call: Karen Kerney (315) 469-0403

Kids Program: volunteering or ideas, call Sue Morgan: (716) 244-7159

Raffle Coordinator: ideas or donations, call Lyn Thor (607) 693-1572

Questions: Bob Hooper, Office Mgr., NOFA-NY (518) 827-8495