Mike Laughlin Receives 2010 Stewardship Award

OEFFA bestowed its highest award on Mike Laughlin, of Johnstown, Ohio. The announcement was made on February 13 as part of OEFFA’s 31st Annual Conference. The Stewardship Award recognizes “outstanding contributions to the sustainable agriculture community.”

Mike Laughlin began on a garden plot in his backyard in Columbus. From these beginnings, he and his family, including wife, Laura, and daughters, Molly and Emily, built a successful business, Northridge Organic Farm, from the ground up. Northridge Organic Farm is a 20 acre farm, producing a variety of certified organic seasonal produce, specializing in heirloom tomatoes. Laughlin also raises Tunis sheep. He sells his produce and lamb at the Worthington Farmers’ Market, and also sells to several restaurants and stores in central Ohio.

Laughlin has been a part of OEFFA since the 1980s. He served as the Chair of the Certification Committee for three years. During his tenure, the number of certified growers expanded from roughly 18 to over 100, and he re-wrote and improved OEFFA’s standards for organic certification. Laughlin founded OEFFA’s Heart of Ohio Chapter, and served as the chapter’s president twice. More recently, from 2005 to 2009, Laughlin served as President of OEFFA’s Board of Directors. Today, he serves as an At-Large Representative on OEFFA’s Board.

“Mike cares deeply for this organization and he cares deeply for the mission of creating a sustainable food system. We should all be sincerely grateful for what Mike has done to advance sustainable agriculture in our community,” said OEFFA Executive Director Carol Goland, who presented the award at the Saturday afternoon ceremony.

We Want to Hear from YOU!  OEFFA’S 2010 Membership Survey

OEFFA couldn’t exist without the support of members like you. We value your opinion and strive each day to better serve you, as we work together to build a healthy food system that brings prosperity to family farmers, helps preserve farmland, offers food security for all Ohioans, and economic development for our rural communities.

In order to grow and improve as an organization, we rely on membership feedback. That’s why we’re about to launch our 2010 membership survey. The survey will be sent out by email in April, to those members we have email addresses for, and then by mail in May to non-respondents and members without email access.

When you receive your survey, please take a few minutes to help us better utilize our most important resource: YOU.

One completed survey will be chosen at random, and the member completing it will receive a free 31st annual OEFFA conference poster, signed by the artist, Kevin Morgan, and a choice of $50 in OEFFA online store credit or $50 off registration for our 2011 conference!

The results of the survey will be tabulated and published in the OEFFA News, with all identifying information kept confidential.

If you have any questions or comments, contact Lauren Ketcham at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 203 or lauren@oeffa.org.
The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association news is published bimonthly as part of the educational mission of OEFFA, a nonprofit organization for farmers, gardeners, and citizens interested in ecological agriculture and creating a sustainable alternative food system.

Members receive the newsletter as part of annual dues of $10 (student), $35 (individual), $50 (family), $50 (family farm), $50 (nonprofit), $100 (business), $1000 (individual lifetime). Subscription only is $20/yr.

Editorial and advertising correspondence may be sent directly to OEFFA office or newsletter@oeffa.org. Unsolicited manuscripts welcome. Membership information is available on the OEFFA website at www.oeffa.org or from the OEFFA office (see address above).

Opinions expressed in OEFFA news are those of the authors and do not reflect the opinions of the membership, officers, or directors.

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OEFFA shall be a democratic association of chartered grassroots chapters, existing within state bylaws, working together to create and promote a healthful, ecological, accountable, and sustainable system of agriculture in Ohio and elsewhere.

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Next deadline May 15, 2010
The increasing popularity of sustainably raised foods has caused many OEFFA members to ask: What's next and what more can OEFFA do to lead willing consumers and producers toward a more sustainable and healthful food supply? OEFFA’s Long Range Plan, completed a year and a half ago, contains guidance on that question as well as a reminder to look for new opportunities to serve OEFFA’s mission.

Thanks to a request by some OEFFA members and friends, we have recently been given the opportunity to put this question to the test: Should OEFFA define and implement a new standard to be applied to the production of milk and meat from ruminants and potentially other animals? This standard could include provisions regarding the percentage of grass vs. grains in the animals’ diet, humane treatment, antibiotic use, growth hormones, and more. It would allow producers and processors under the label to market their food as “Ohio Grass Grazed.”

The underlying issue is this: The National Organic Program (NOP) recognizes only one standard. But that is not how people think about the food that they purchase. They evaluate, on some level, not only whether the food is organic, but whether it is locally produced, and to what degree it is responsibly produced.

There are very few people who purchase 100% of their food certified organic. However, a large number of conscientious consumers make an effort to distinguish among foods that exist along the spectrum between certified organic and “conventionally” produced foods.

Certified organic is the gold standard of certification. However, we cannot ignore the fact that 95% of the food purchased in America is not organic and is not all produced with the same degree of conscientiousness.

There is a momentous opportunity for OEFFA to help make sense of this “in-between” food and to help consumers understand how it compares to certified organic. On the downside, there is some danger that additional certifications will confuse consumers (in some cases they have already), and that they might ultimately undermine the organic label.

The Board wants your input before we make a decision at our April meeting. Please send your comments to grassgrazed@oeffa.org, or to the office before April 23. If you’d like to participate in a discussion list serve, please go to: www.oeffa.org/mailman/listinfo/oeffaco_grassgrazed.

Darren Malhame
Board President
Food Safety: New Regulations on the Horizon for Produce Growers
By Mike Anderson and Lauren Ketcham

Chances are good that if you are producing fresh produce you’ve heard of the numerous food safety initiatives that are gathering steam. The food safety regulation train that’s been barreling across the country made a whistle stop in Columbus recently. Farmers came from across the state to give input to FDA and USDA staffs who have been charged with working together to write the new regulations. The focus of the meeting was not whether or not regulations were needed—the decision to adopt food safety standards has already been made—but to get feedback from growers about what the regulations should or should not include, how regulations can be tailored to small growers, and what practices growers have already adopted that ensure food safety.

The proposed rules that the FDA is writing will address four areas of the produce production system: the use of compost and manure, worker hygiene, wildlife, and water use. As the FDA and USDA draft these rules, they are seeking input from farmers. Specifically, comments that address the following topics (among many others) could help shape the final rule:

- Identification and prioritization of risk factors;
- The impact of scale on the nature and degree of possible food safety hazards;
- The coordination of produce food safety practices and environmental and conservation goals and practices;
- Post-harvest operations and the role of current good manufacturing practices; and
- Coordination of produce food safety practices and sustainable and/or organic production methods.

As the FDA and USDA write these rules, the Ohio Produce Growers and Marketers Association (OPGMA) is coordinating with other organizations, including OEFFA, to develop an Ohio-specific produce safety standard, the Ohio Fresh Produce Marketing Agreement (OFPMA). The OFPMA will present a set of standards related to four areas of concern: the use of compost and manure, water, worker hygiene, and produce traceability.

This Ohio-based standard is designed as a three tier system, although farmers and sellers at all tiers would have to receive training from OSU on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and on the core standards. Tier 1 is designed for farmers who direct market at roadside farm markets, farmer’s markets, and CSAs. Compliance is voluntary and inspections are random. Tier 2 is designed for intra-state sellers of produce like produce auctions. Compliance is mandatory and inspections are scheduled. Tier 3 is designed for inter-state sellers. Inspections would be mandatory and unannounced.

At the same time, the USDA is developing a National Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement (NLGMA), which would outline production and handling regulations for a long list of leafy greens. The USDA held hearings throughout the fall on this proposal and OEFFA Executive Director Carol Goland provided testimony opposing the marketing agreement at the October hearing in Columbus. The NLGMA was conceived after the spinach scare of 2006 and has had devastating effects on small farmers in California, where the idea was originally developed. The threat of overly restrictive, one-size-fits-all regulations in the NLGMA led to the creation of the OFPMA.

On top of this, the U.S. Senate is currently considering food safety legislation as well. S. 510, the Food Safety and Modernization Act, despite substantial improvements, still threatens to undermine good conservation and biodiversity practices, slow or reverse the development of strong local and regional food systems, and bar access to markets for small and mid-sized farms. A coalition of sustainable agriculture organizations are working on amendments to the bill, including S. 2758, the Growing Safe Food Act, which would provide scale-appropriate training and technical assistance on food safety for small and mid-sized producers and small processors and wholesalers.

Take Action!
Before you succumb to that sick feeling in the pit of your stomach as you try to comprehend what this alphabet soup of new regulation and oversight will mean for you, we need your help!

The FDA regulations may be written as soon as October of this year, the OFPMA may be ready for implementation by the end of the year, and S. 510 is expected to reach the Senate floor this spring. So, now is the time to have your voice heard, and make sure that any new regulations protect Ohio’s small farms and local food systems. Here’s how you can get involved:

1. Submit comments to the FDA—Electronic comments can be submitted at http://www.regulations.gov. Written comments can be sent to the Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305), FDA, 5630 Fishers Ln., Rm. 1061, Rockville, MD 20852. For more information contact Michelle Smith at the FDA at (301) 436-2024.

2. Volunteer as a representative to the OFPMA Board—The OFPMA is seeking Ohio produce growers to serve on the board that will create the standards. If you are interested in serving on the board, please email cgoland@oeffa.org. For more information about the OFPMA, go to http://www.opgma.org/ or call Karl Kolb, Food Safety Senior Project Manager with OPGMA, at (715) 723-4915.

3. Join OEFFA Direct, our listserv, or follow OEFFA on Facebook to receive up to date action alerts and news about food safety issues that affect you. To subscribe to OEFFA Direct, email oeffa@oeffa.org. Find OEFFA on Facebook at http://www.oeffa.org/facebook.
New and returning OEFFA Education Board members were elected for the 2010-2011 term at the February membership business meeting, held during OEFFA’s 31st Annual Conference. The new board, which is also comprised of chapter representatives, brings together the talents and commitments of farmers, restaurateurs, farmers’ market managers, and consumers. The OEFFA Certification Board is comprised of those members of the OEFFA Board who do not have holdings in any entity certified by OEFFA.

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2009 In Review: OEFFA’s Annual Report
OEFFA’s 2009 annual report is now available online!
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Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board Update
By Carol Goland

The implementing legislation for the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board has been introduced in both the Ohio House and Senate. In the House, HB414 was referred to the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, which heard testimony from both proponents and opponents of the bill and eventually passed the bill out of committee with amendments.

The committee grappled with the issue of funding for the board at length. The original legislation proposed to fund the committee with additional taxes on commercial feed (adding 5 cents per ton each year for three years) to provide about $500,000 in annual funding for the board. Eventually, legislators balked at that and opted to fund the board from the State’s general revenue funds at a much reduced level instead. It’s unclear exactly what the board will be able to accomplish with such limited funding.

OEFFA’s testimony at the hearings focused on: concerns that any rules passed by the board might conflict with the national organic standards, the absence of any representation for organic producers among the board’s designated seats, and the lack of expertise at the ODA regarding organics and problems that could create during any sort of complaint-initiated inspection. Thanks to this testimony, the committee voted to approve an amendment that specifies that any rules adopted by the board that would conflict with the NOP standards will not apply to certified organic livestock.

HB414 was passed by the full House on March 10 with a vote of 98 to 0. The Senate’s version of the bill, SB 233, was introduced more recently, and it has been referred to the Senate Agriculture Committee.

At the same time, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), organized as Ohioans for Humane Farms, has announced its intention to include a measure on the November ballot that will direct the board to adopt minimum standards regarding confined spaces for Ohio livestock. The irony, of course, is that if this amendment passes, the board will be required to enforce the very thing that it was formed to try to avoid.

For more information about the ballot initiative, go to:
http://www.ohiohumane.com/

To read SB233, go to:
http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=128_SB_233
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Over 850 people joined together in Granville, Ohio in February to attend keynote presentations by Joel Salatin and Chef Ann Cooper, hands-on workshops, a film screening with King Corn’s Curt Ellis, and enjoy the other activities over the weekend.

OEFFA’s staff would like to thank everyone who came and made this year’s conference the best event ever, especially the many volunteers and workshop presenters who made it possible. Thank you!
We know what it takes to run a farm. So we’ve figured out an easy, efficient and yes, affordable, way for farmers to have websites. Without technical knowledge. Without hassles. And without spending a fortune. For your free demo and info, visit smallfarmcentral.com.
Obama Fails to Close Mega Farm Loopholes

The centerpiece of President Obama’s rural policy platform was to lower the limits and close the loopholes that allow mega farms to evade the dollar limits authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill. However, when the USDA published the final rule in January, they had not taken action to close the loopholes.

The verdict keeps intact the farm subsidy loopholes that allow mega farms to get around the Farm Bill’s payment limits by subdividing their operations into multiple paper corporations. This loophole allows hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars to go to a single farming operation, underwriting the growth in farm size and the demise of mid-scale family farms.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has named the loopholes as a significant problem that leads to frequent abuse and weakens the integrity of the programs. Additionally, nearly three-quarters of the over 5,000 public comments received on the rule specifically recommended that the loophole be closed.

The rule is effective immediately and it is unlikely that farm subsidy reform will be revisited during the first term of the Obama Presidency.

Beth Knorr Appointed to USDA Committee

Beth Knorr, the market manager for the Cuyahoga Valley Countryside Conservancy, has been appointed to the USDA Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee. Beth is one of only 25 industry professionals selected to serve on this committee, and is the only person representing Ohio.

USDA to Rework NAIS

Faced with stiff resistance from ranchers and farmers, the Obama administration has decided to scrap the controversial National Animal Identification System (NAIS), a program intended to help authorities quickly identify and track livestock in the event of an animal disease outbreak. The system was created by the Bush administration in 2004 after the discovery in late 2003 of a cow infected with mad cow disease.

In abandoning the program, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack said the department would start over in trying to develop a livestock tracing program that could win widespread support from the industry. USDA officials said that it would be left to the states to devise many aspects of a new system, including requirements for identifying livestock.

Atrazine Linked to Sexual Abnormalities in Amphibians

A recent study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences demonstrates the reproductive consequences of atrazine exposure in adult amphibians. As tadpoles, frogs were put in water with 2.5 parts per billion (ppb) of atrazine—a concentration within federal drinking water standards. Atrazine-exposed males were completely feminized, developing into functional females capable of producing viable eggs and offspring.

This latest study adds to the growing scientific evidence which shows that atrazine, one of the most common herbicides used in the U.S., negatively affects the immune, hormone, and reproductive systems of aquatic animals.
Books, Guides, and Reports

Soil Health Guide — SARE has released the third edition of Building Soils for Better Crops, a 308-page up-to-date, comprehensive, and practical guide to building soil health. The book contains case studies, background information, and step-by-step guidance on soil-improving techniques. It is available electronically for free or hard copies can be purchased for $20.95.

www.sare.org/publications

Farmers’ Market Manager Training Manual — The Farmers’ Market Federation of New York has compiled a manual for farmers’ market managers which provides checklists, sample policies, worksheets, and other hands-on tools to help managers start markets and build market communities.


Organic Survey Results — The USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has released the results of the Organic Production Survey, the USDA’s first-ever, wide-scale survey of organic producers. The results include state and national level data on organic farm numbers and acreage, sales, production, marketing practices, and more.

www.agcensus.usda.gov


Websites

Goat Information Website — Notes on Goats is a comprehensive website dedicated to providing the latest research, information, and news about goats, and includes sections on breeds, selection, housing, breeding, feeding, health, records, budgets, marketing, quality assurance, environment, and regulatory issues.

www.notesongoats.com

Season Extension Website — Season Extension in the Midwest features articles by organic experts and high tunnel growers; information about upcoming events, conferences, and workshops; and pictures and stories about farmers who are currently using season extension in their growing operation.

www.midwestseasonextension.org

Farm Management Decision Software — Iowa State University has developed a new, free, online tool, called I-FARM, to help farmers get the most out of their land at the least cost. The I-FARM program allows farmers to input various aspects of their operation and location and the computer software predicts and compares farming outcomes.

www.i-farmtools.org

Funding Opportunities

Federal Programs and Grants Guide — The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) has introduced a “quick-guide” to federal programs and grants for farmers, ranchers, and food entrepreneurs. The guide is a one-stop shop for information about USDA programs and important dates and deadlines.

www.sustainableagriculture.net/publications/grassrootsguide/farm-bill-programs-and-grants/

Small Business Loan Programs — The GrowNOW program offers small business owners, including farmers, up to a 3 percent interest rate reduction on bank loans for two years. The Ag-LINK program gives farmers a lower interest rate on a loan for one year.

www.ohiotreasurer.gov

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Thank you for your business.
Ohio State University researchers are conducting a study, endorsed by the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) and OEFFA, and supported by the USDA Organic Research and Education Initiative. The purpose of this project is to develop a better understanding of how organic farmers identify and manage unwanted and hard to control weeds in their fields.

As part of this study, we need to learn about effective weed management techniques that are used on Ohio’s organic farms as well as the understandings organic farmers have of the practices promoted by Extension. We are also interested in learning how farmers manage risk on the farm and in everyday life. By providing input, farmers will help OSU gain a better understanding of the real weed problems faced by organic farmers on their farms and help us develop better weed management programs that focus on important issues identified by Ohio’s organic farmers.

In order for this to be a success, we need up to 30 farmers to volunteer their time and farms for one or more parts of the project, which are:

1) We are seeking farmers who can give 1 to 1.5 hours of time to sit down and be interviewed about how they identify and manage weeds on their farms. The interviews will take place on-farm during Fall 2010 and Winter 2011. Farmers will receive a $25 gift card.

2) We would like to have access to fields for soil sampling to study the weed seed bank. Sampling will take place on a single day during Spring 2011. Several months of greenhouse work will be required on campus to complete the survey. At the end of the survey, you will be provided with a list and ranking of all weeds identified in your field.

3) We would like to conduct in-depth interviews to learn about the economics of weed management and tool adoption. Farmers will receive a $50 gift card.

Specifically, we are looking for farmers who represent a diversity of perspectives: only grow produce or only grow row crops; grow a combination of row crops and produce; grow produce and/or row crops with dairy; have different levels of experience (new and long-time farmers); have a hard time with weed control; successfully control weeds; direct market; sell to retailers and restaurants; and sell to wholesalers.

To participate in this study or to get more information, please contact Jason Parker at (614) 688-4373 or parker.294@osu.edu

Jason Parker is a Post Doctoral Researcher with OSU’s Department of Horticulture and Crop Science.
OEFFA News           Early Spring 2010

A series where OEFFA staff answers frequently asked questions about the NOP, and offers suggestions for working within the regulations. We hope this column will be helpful to our organic producers and consumers.

By Lexie Stoia Pierce and Andy Hupp (OEFFA Certification), and Mike Anderson (OEFFA Education)

What Is (and Isn’t) Regulated by the NOP? Part I

The Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) was enacted under the 1990 Farm Bill. The act authorized a national, uniform organic production and handling standard (i.e. the NOP, created in 2002). It also established the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), the advisory board on organic standards that reports to the Secretary of Agriculture. The NOP is a relatively young standard, and thus contains some “holes” where certain agricultural products do not fit in so well. The NOSB has made recommendations on how to handle these gray areas in the NOP and NOP officials have stated that they will address these standards (or lack thereof) in the upcoming months.

Aquaculture (Fish and Marine Plants)*
Fish and aquatic plants are not regulated under the NOP. In November 2008, the NOSB recommended that, due to “trying to resolve inherent incompatibilities between terrestrial and aquatic animals,” the NOP create a separate standard to certify aquatic animals. The NOP has not acted on this recommendation yet. If you see fish labeled as “organic,” the fish is either fraudulently mislabeled or certified to another country’s standard—but you can trust that it is NOT certified to the NOP standards.

Apiculture (Honeybees)*
The NOP website clarifies that bees are ‘certifiable’ under its regulations:
Bees are considered livestock and would be covered under sections 205.236 through 205.239 of the standards. Honey may be certified to the NOP standards using the livestock and handling standards. Bees must be managed from the second day of life as organic, as with poultry. Feed organic feed; no prohibited substances. If certified in accordance with the NOP standards, they may be labeled according to the NOP regulations. Other standards may not be used in lieu of the NOP regulations for products labeled using the NOP logo or reference to the NOP regulations.

However, as honeybees may forage 2 or more miles away, in order for a certification agency to verify “Feed organic feed; no prohibited substances,” the operator must be able show that this would be true within a 2 mile radius. As a result, it is rare to find domestic certified organic honey.

Personal Care Products
Some manufacturers of shampoos, lotions, and other personal care items have taken advantage of the non-regulation of their products. That is not to say that personal care products can’t be certified—for example, soaps can often be certified to the “Made with Organic [ingredients]” category of the NOP. Those personal care product manufacturers that make products that are truly certified to the NOP must unfairly compete with the non-certified, non-regulated products. If you look at the ingredients in an ‘organic’ shampoo and see Propylparaben or EDTA, you have a product that definitely was not certified to the NOP standards.
In December 2009, the NOSB recommended that the NOP add language to the standards to specifically highlight that personal care products must be certified to the standard to be labeled as ‘organic,’ and to give the NOP the power to police such products.

Fertilizers & Lawn Care
The most confusing, non-regulated “organic” products are organic fertilizers—because the word “organic” in front of fertilizer may simply mean chemically organic (derived from animal or plant matter) rather than “certified to the NOP.” Since all products certified must be at least 70% agricultural, “Organic Potting Soil” would not be certifiable. A fertilizer labeled as “organic” does not necessarily mean it is approved for use in organic production, so if your land is certified organic, please check with your certification agency before use! Usually, fertilizers are “approved for use” in an organic system rather than certified organic.

If you are using an organic lawn care service, you may want to ask some questions about their practices, as this is also not covered by the NOP. Do they use sewage sludge (also known as ‘bio-solids’) as an input, which is prohibited under the NOP? Are all other fertilizers or lawn care treatments approved for use in an organic system? How familiar are they with the NOP? It never hurts to ask.

In the next issue: hydroponics, pet food, textiles, and mushrooms.

A complete list of NOSB recommendations can be found at:
http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/NOSB

*Staff from the NOP noted that the following areas are on the NOP agenda (USDA NOP Accredited Certifiers Training. January, 2010).
Sunlight streams in across the table, across my seed, herb start, and amendment catalogs. The new season begins!

Last season the tiny seedlings I thought were self-seeded parsley, grew into another favorite, cilantro. I want to grow cilantro again this year, along parsley, and a celery called par-cel. Par-cel, eaten fresh has a strong flavor and a sprig or two will satisfy in a salad. Par-cel adds a wonderfully mild and slightly sweet flavor in cooked dishes.

Leaf lettuce comes in many colors and shapes. I plant as many as I can, picking a few bottom leaves from each plant and extending the harvest that way for many months. I also stagger planting times so that new lettuce is always coming along.

Last year I grew eggplant for the first time. I picked a cultivar with slim fruits, just right for my needs. The eggplants were tender and full of flavor, and I will plant them again this year.

I’d like to grow a few potatoes, learning about their needs in this climate. It’s exciting to read the above-ground signs of the underground progress. The search for new potatoes is always fun. Is anything really happening under there?

I plant carrot seeds in the spring when the soil is more evenly moist than later in the season. Some years I’ve covered the carrots in the fall with several inches of leaves and have had fresh carrots into late winter.

A new crop planned for this year is purslane, which contains high levels of vitamin C. It’s also the best source of omega-3 fatty acids found in the plant kingdom.

I’ll plan space for tomatoes, kale, broccoli, two kinds of basil, Rosemary, garlic, leeks, and peas. Permanent plantings include several herbs, blueberries, raspberries, and grapes.

Most years I toss buckwheat seeds under established crops starting about July 4. This year, I’ll plant crimson clover and hairy vetch instead. Since hairy vetch prepares the soil for tomatoes, I will plant vetch where I plan to plant tomatoes in 2011.

It’s too cold today to garden, to dig, to plant, to tend. However, as I sit with the sun shining across the table, I know today is going to be a good day to think, plan, and order seeds.
3 easy ways to stay up-to-date on food and farming events, workshops, resources and news

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OEFFA News  Early Spring 2010
Community Food Initiatives Annual Meeting: “Farming for a New Generation”
Sunday, April 11, 2010—5 p.m.
Athens Recreation Center
Athens, Ohio
Learn about CFI’s efforts to create resilient communities through community gardening, farm to school initiatives, and community orchards. The event will feature keynote speakers and local farmers, Matt and Angie Starline of Starline Organics, Bring a potluck dish to share. Cost: Free. For more information, contact Ronda at (740) 593-5971 or cfi@frognet.net.

Goat Keeping and Cheesemaking: From Milking to Eating
Sunday, April 11, 2010—1-4 p.m.
Sunday, June 16, 2010—1-4 p.m.
Blue Rock Station
Philo, Ohio
This workshop will cover the basics of goat keeping and cheesemaking for the farmstead, including milking, milk processing, and how to keep goats healthy naturally. Cost: $35. For more information, contact Annie at (740) 674-4300 or annie@bluerockstation.com.

Free Seed Give Away
Monday, April 12, 2010—9-5 p.m.
Glouster, Lottridge, Mineral, and Nelsonville, Ohio
Community Food Initiatives will host a Free Seed Give Away day at the Tri-County Community Action Building in Glouster, the Friends and Neighbors Food Pantry in Lottridge, Feed My Sheep in Mineral, and the Nelsonville Food Cupboard. Seed potatoes and vegetable seeds will be available while supplies last. Cost: Free. For more information, contact Lester at (740) 593-5971 or lester@cfi@frognet.net.

Local Food All Year: A Workshop for People Who Want to Make it Happen
Friday, April 16, 2010—8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Ohio Department of Agriculture
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio
Learn about the science behind forest gardening and how to incorporate the practices into your life. prickles, and “farmaceuticals.” This public lecture introduces the concept of forest gardening, its scientific background, living examples, and some useful perennial edibles you can use in your own garden. Cost: Free.

Hands-On Cheesemaking
Monday, April 26-Wednesday, April 28, 2010
Grindstone Creek Lodge at 4-H Camp Whitewood
Windsor, Ohio
This workshop will feature hands-on cheesemaking with Peter Dixon. Sponsored by OSU Extension, Ashtabula County, and Enhancing Dairy Profitability with Artisan Cheese. Cost: $450. For more information, visit http://ashtabula.osu.edu/events/cheesemaking-class-april-2010.

Cheesemaking for Beginners
Saturday, June 12, 2010—10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Fulton Creek Jersey Cheese
Richwood, Ohio
Using fresh milk gathered from the farm, Sylvia Zimmerman will teach participants how to make several soft cheeses and one hard cheese. Cost: $30. For more information, contact (740) 363-2548 or visit http://www.stratfordecologicalcenter.org.

OEFFA’s “Gardening Like the Forest” Workshop Series

1st Annual Agriculture Night at the Ballpark
Saturday, April 24, 2010—6 p.m.
Toledo Mud Huns Fifth Third Stadium
Toledo, Ohio
The Toledo Mud Hens take on the Columbus Clippers at Toledo’s 1st Annual Agriculture Night at the Ballpark. Cost: $8. For more information, contact Scott Rourke at (419) 725-4539 or srourke@mudhens.com.

“Asparagus! Stalking the American Life”
Tuesday, April 27, 2010—6-9 p.m.
Akron Main Library Auditorium
60 S. Main St., Akron, Ohio
The Countryside Conservancy will be showing “Asparagus! Stalking the American Life” as part of its “Don’t Buy Food From Strangers” film series. The event will include a viewing, discussion, and refreshments. Cost: Free. For more information, contact Katie Myers at (330) 657-2355 or kmyers@countryide.org.

Earth Day at Blue Rock Station
Saturday, April 17, 2010—9 a.m.-12 p.m.
Blue Rock Station
Philo, Ohio
Tour Ohio’s first Earthship, a 2,200 square foot house that utilizes tires, cans, old barn wood, bottles, straw bales and mud to form a home heated by the sun, earth and wood. The day will also feature hands-on activities, including bike repair with Chris Luers and green cleaning with Diane Luers of Little Square Farm. Cost: $10. For more information, contact Annie at (740) 674-4300 or annie@bluerockstation.com.

Celebrating Wool
Saturday, April 17, 2010—9 a.m.-12 p.m.
Turner Farm
Cincinnati, Ohio
This workshop will feature shearing, felting, spinning, knitting, woodworking, storytelling, and a felted wool puppet show. Cost: Free. For more information, contact Sally Godschalk at (513) 984-0174 or visit www.turnerfarm.org.

Food Symposium: “Food and Farming for the Future: Eat Healthy/Grow Responsibly”
Thursday, April 22, 2010
Wilmington College
Wilmington, Ohio
The day-long event will feature several presenters on such topics as Earth-friendly methods of food production, fresh and green food alternatives, and feeding the world’s growing population. For more information, contact Donald Chafin at (937) 382-6661 or visit www.wilmington.edu/news/Food-Symposium-to-Highlight-Eat-HealthyGrow-Responsibly.cfm.

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OEFFA’s “Gardening Like the Forest” Workshop Series

Gardening Like the Forest: Fundamentals of Ecological Gardening
Saturday July 24-Sunday, July 25, 2010—8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
The Intergenerational School
12299 Fairhill Rd., Cleveland, Ohio
Saturday, July 31-Sunday, August 1, 2010—8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Stratford Ecological Center
3083 Liberty Rd., Delaware, Ohio
Ecosystem agriculture mimics the structure and function of natural ecosystems in food-producing ecologies. This workshop explores the vision, theory, design, and practice of ecosystem agriculture using the temperate deciduous forest as the model. Lectures, field observations, and experiential classes will help participants develop practical design principles, practices, patterns, and processes for garden design and management. Cost: $175-$225 (sliding scale). Pre-registration required.

Gardening Like the Forest: Urban Ecological Food Production
Saturday, August 7, 2010—8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Civic Garden Center
2715 Reading Rd., Cincinnati, Ohio
How can we mimic the structure and function of natural ecosystems while producing food in city environments? This workshop explores the vision, theory, design, and practice of urban ecosystem agriculture. We will focus on design scenarios of particular interest to city gardeners using a combination of lectures and experiential exercises. Cost: $100-$125 (sliding scale).

Intensive Forest Gardening Course
Monday, August 9-Sunday, August 15, 2010
Andelain Fields
Springfield, Ohio
Dive deeply into the vision, theory, design, and practice of creating edible ecosystems using the temperate deciduous forest ecosystem as a model. This week-long emersion course offers lectures, site walks, and experiential exercises to help you understand the architecture, social structure, underground economies, and successional processes of natural forests. You’ll also learn a variety of ecological design processes while designing a range of food-producing ecologies at our host farm near Yellow Springs. Cost: $700-$1000 (sliding scale). Pre-registration required.

Pre-registration required.

Registration
You can register for any of the events that require pre-registration by sending a check (along with your name, address, phone number and email) to OEFFA Forest Garden, 41 Croswell Rd., Columbus, OH 43214.
For more information about the “Gardening Like the Forest” workshop series, contact Laura Wies at (614) 421-2022 or laura@oeffa.org.

UN-CLASSIFIED ADS

For Sale: Certified organic straw (3x3x8) and certified organic soybeans. Call David in Tuscarawas County at (740) 922-9316.

For Sale: 100% grass fed beef. No antibiotics in feed or growth hormones used. Sold frozen or fresh. Price is $3.90/lb on the hanging weight (HOTW), processing included. Delivery is extra. Contact Arthur in Amity, PA at (202) 213-5237 or scre5@aol.com.

For Sale: Certified organic hay, 4x4 round bales, mixed grasses and red clover, first cutting, stored inside. No pesticides used. We can deliver or we can help to load your truck. Price is $40/bale or $132/ton. Contact Arthur in Amity, PA at (202) 213-5237 or scre5@aol.com.


For Sale: Holland 1 Carousel Transplanter, 3 pt, water tank. Call Steve in Cincinnati at (513) 706-4792.

For Sale: 1972 International Cub High Boy with cultivator and 3 pt hitch for $1800. Call Gary in Marion County at (740) 528-2155.

Farm for Sale: House with 3 BR, 2.5 BA, huge kitchen, full basement, loft, and attached 2-car garage. The property is 8.8 acres with 5 acres of fenced pasture. 24x36 pole barn with chicken pen and cow stall. 10 min from Circleville. Asking $264,900. Call Edson in Pickaway County at (740) 477-3598.

Farm for Sale: 15.75 acres, 12 ready to be certified organic, between Oberlin and the Cleveland area. 1950s ranch house has 3 BR, 1.5 BA. Connected efficiency suite has a kitchen, full BA, and a BR-living room combination. 3-car garage and a 30x30 barn included. Asking $295,000. Call Roz in Lorain County at (440) 236-8408.

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OEFFA News  Early Spring 2010
Your Ideas Wanted:

Planning is underway for the 32nd Annual OEFFA Conference. We’re taking suggestions, including conference titles, workshop and keynote presenters and topics. If you’d like to be part of workshop, food, book table, raffle, or kids’ conference planning, please let us know. Contact Renee Hunt at renee@oeffa.org or (614) 421-2022 Ext. 205.

OEFFA Conference Audio Recordings

With more than 60 workshops, 2 keynote addresses, and a full day pre-conference event, OEFFA’s 31st annual conference was chocked full of great information on everything from tree grafting to pork production. Whether you were unable to attend, or just weren’t able to catch all the workshops you would have liked, you can now purchase the audio recordings from this year’s conference. For more information, go to http://organicvoices.com/html/oeffa.html, or call (952) 432-3079.

New USDA Pasture Rule Will Give Consumers More Confidence in Organic Meat and Dairy

On February 12, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Organic Program (NOP) published a long-anticipated final rule establishing pasture standards for organic livestock. The new rule gives teeth to the existing NOP policy, allowing organic certifiers, like OEFFA, to better ensure that organic milk and meat products come from animals that are actively grazed on pasture and have daily access to fresh air and sunshine.

The new pasture rule provides the clear and specific language needed to enforce one of the central requirements of organic livestock production—that organic cows are raised on natural pasture and eat fresh, green, growing plants. The rule sets specific guidelines that require dairy cows and other ruminants to be on pasture for the entire grazing season of not less than 120 days and that at least 30 percent of their feed comes from pasture during the season.

“The publication of the final rule will enable us to consistently and fairly enforce the requirements for access to pasture and provides greater clarity for farmers,” said OEFFA Certification Program Manager Lexie Stoia Pierce.

Although most organic farms in Ohio have long exceeded these requirements, the clarity provided in this new rule will ensure that organic mega-dairies elsewhere in the country will bring their practices in line with not just the spirit of organics but what is now the letter of the law. “The organic farmers that we represent are celebrating this rule because it will help to protect the integrity of the organic label,” said Stoia Pierce.

“In publishing this rule, the USDA is recognizing overwhelming public support for access to pasture. For consumers who care about the humane treatment of livestock, the organic standards ensure that animals are raised in living conditions that allow them to exhibit their natural behaviors, graze, and move freely,” concluded Stoia Pierce.

To access the USDA’s Access to Pasture Rule, go to http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5082652&acct=noprulemaking.