

"Building a just, secure, sustainable and

SAVING SEEDS

democratic food system."

MAINE'S FOOD SOVEREIGNTY JOURNAL

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Urban Seeds of Community

by Jonah Fertig

I sat with new friends around a fire, sharing a bowl of soup. We had finished working in the garden together, planting seeds and seedlings on a warm May day. The trees overhead glowed and conversation flowed as the fire crackled. I could have been in the middle of field on a farm, but I was looking up to streetlights, a large urban community center and a freeway. I was sitting in the South Bronx in a community garden and felt connected to the land.

My path to the land and to local foods came through community gardening, environmental activism and cooking. I grew up in the suburbs of Portland, Maine where much of the farmland was turning into Winn Farm Rd or Apple Orchard Estates. My parents gardened when I was younger, but as I got older, the garden grew smaller and smaller. I went to college in New York City in the mid 90s and got involved in art and activism. Most of the activism I initially got involved in consisted of holding signs and writing letters which left me uninspired.

A friend invited me to a Spring



Photo by Arthur Fink

Local Sprouts and Cultivating Community working together in the kitchen.

Equinox Celebration at a place called Casa Del Sol. Casa Del Sol was a squatted tenement building that had been turned into a community center, residence, puppet studio and a home to the More Gardens Coalition. At that point in 1999, Rudolph Giuliani was threatening to bulldoze over 700 community gardens in New York City and More Gardens was on the forefront of the

struggle to not only save these gardens but also start new ones. They combined puppetry, direct action, gardening and community building.

At the Equinox Celebration, I experienced an awakening of my yearning for a connection to the land. The layers of urban concrete were cracking

See **URBAN SEEDS OF COMMUNITY** on page 20

More than 200,000 NGOs, Farmers, Consumers, and Organic Producers Call for USDA to Prohibit GE Alfalfa

Resulting contamination of non-GE and organic alfalfa hay and seed would devastate livelihoods and organic industry.

Center for Food Safety

The National Organic Coalition (NOC) announced March 3 that more than 200,000 people submitted comments to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) critiquing the substance and conclusions of its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on Genetically Engineered (GE) Alfalfa. Groups, including NOC, Center for Food Safety (CFS), Organic Consumers Association, Food & Water Watch, CREDO Action and Food Democracy Now, mobilized their communities to help generate the unprecedented number of comments.

In addition, more than 300 public interest organizations, farmers, dairies, retailers and organic food producers from the U.S. and Canada delivered a

strongly worded letter to USDA, calling upon it to deny approval of Monsanto's genetically engineered Round-up Ready alfalfa (GE alfalfa). The letter cites the inevitable contamination of organic and non-GE alfalfa hay and seeds and threats to the viability of organic dairies, livestock, and meat and dairy producers as reasons for urging the denial. NOC, Organic Valley, Whole Foods, National Cooperative Grocers



Association, CFS and others agree that it would be irresponsible government policy to approve GE alfalfa in the absence of legal requirements holding companies accountable for GE contamination, as is currently the case. In 2006, CFS sued USDA for its illegal approval of Monsanto's GE alfalfa.

See **GE ALFALFA** on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The TRADE Act	2
Letters to the Editor.....	3
Maine's Raw Milk Producers Misinformed, to be "Assisted into Compliance"	4
Raw Milk is a Complete and Balanced Food.....	4
Obama's Hollow Rhetoric-The Trail Of Broken Promises.....	5
Concentration in the Seed Industry Leads to Less Choice, Higher Prices for U.S. Farmers	6
Facts on the Corporate Consolidation of Food and Farming	6
Bust the Trust to take Back Control of Our Food System.....	7
Growing Habitat, Embracing Diversity	8
Democratic Choice	10
Peasant Agriculture Can Cool the Planet.....	10
Via Campesina North American Calls First Public Hearing to Prepare the Presentation of the GM Maize Case Before International Courts	11
Maine Family Farms & Supporters Call for Scale-Appropriate Regulations to Protect Traditional Farming.....	12
Facing Our Global Water Crisis	13
Ask CR	14
Recipes from Our 80/20 Kitchen	15
Proposal to Turn Co-op Into Co-producer	15
Jim Cook Memorial Award 2010 Nominees.....	16
Young People Taking Matters Into Their Own Hands . . . Literally	17
Improving Life for Rural Farmers Brings Organizations Together.....	18
Bringing It Home: Lots to Gardens.....	18
5th Annual Local & Sustainable Foods Conference.....	19

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- **MFT Director John Piotti Responds to Landless Farmer – Letters**, page 3
- **Maine Raw Milk Producers To Be "Assisted into Compliance"** – page 4
- **Bust the Trusts** – page 6
Ending concentration in agriculture
- **Growing Habitat, Embracing Diversity, Part 1 by CR Lawn** – page 8
- **Young people making it happen – Greenhorns, Reclaim the Fields, Crop Mob** – page 17

Food For Maine's Future

"Building a just, secure and democratic food system."



PO Box 51
Sedgwick, ME 04676

ABOUT SAVING SEEDS

Food for Maine's Future is pleased to present our ninth issue of *Saving Seeds*. Named after the age old practice threatened by a rapidly consolidating seed industry and U.S. and international laws that restrict farmer's rights, to the benefit of powerful multinational corporations, this bi-annual newspaper provides readers with the latest news and views from the growing international movement for food sovereignty. Please share it with a friend.

Ninth Issue: Spring 2010
Circulation: 7,500 print run

SAVING SEEDS

A Publication of
Food for Maine's Future
www.foodformainesfuture.org
Food for Maine's Future
PO Box 51
Sedgwick, ME 04676



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Food for Maine's Future Mission Statement

Food for Maine's Future seeks to build a just, secure, sustainable and democratic food system to the benefit of all Maine farmers, communities, and the environment. ✿

Editorial

The TRADE Act

by Sarah Bigney, Maine Fair Trade Campaign

When the public and media talk about the failures of NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, it's usually about the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs. Maine alone has lost over 30,000 manufacturing jobs since NAFTA passed in 1994. What we don't hear about as often is the impact these ifree trade rules have had on so many other sectors of the economy.

For small farmers here in the U.S. and around the world, the results have been equally devastating. These trade rules benefit the biggest multi-national corporations and undermine small farmer's ability to survive. Dumping of commodities at below cost of production has forced small farmers everywhere off their land. Corporate farms have flourished as small family farming has become harder and harder everywhere.

Luckily, not everyone accepts this status quo. Maine's Congressman Mike Michaud is the lead sponsor of a bill that would fundamentally change free trade agreements. His bill, the T.R.A.D.E. Act of 2009, was submitted to Congress last June. It stands for the Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment Act.

Michaud saw how NAFTA was destroying the Maine economy. He got together with fair traders from around the country and wrote The TRADE Act as a blueprint bill for moving forward

to reform trade policy.

The TRADE Act calls for a review of existing trade agreements. What is the impact of NAFTA, CAFTA, and the World Trade Organization? What has happened to jobs and wages? What has happened to prices of agricultural commodities? Let's find out what the real impact has been before we pass any more free trade deals.

Next, the TRADE Act lays out what must and must not be in future agreements. Under the TRADE Act, trade agreements must:

- Ensure adequate and stable market returns for farmers in each country that is a party to the trade agreement,
- Ensure adequate and affordable supplies of safe food for consumers,
- Protect the right of countries to encourage conservation through the use of best practices,
- Ensure fair treatment of agricultural workers in each country that is a party to the trade agreement,
- Protect the right of countries to prevent dumping of agricultural commodities at below the cost of production through border regulations or other mechanisms and policies,
- Protect the right of each country to establish policies that require farmers to receive fair payment for their management and labor, and
- Preserve any existing United States law relating to antitrust and anti-

competitive business practices from being preempted or rendered ineffective by the trade agreement.

The TRADE Act calls for existing trade agreements to be re-negotiated to meet these fair trade standards. It also establishes a new process for negotiating free trade agreements, one that includes Congress and the states.

The TRADE Act currently has 137 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives. Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio introduced the bill in the Senate and we here in Maine are working hard to get Senator Olympia Snowe to co-sponsor this crucial legislation.

Food for Maine's Future is a member of the Maine Fair Trade Campaign, a coalition of 58 organizations across the state working to reform trade policy so that it benefits the many, not just the few. We envision a global economy where workers have rights, where the environment is protected, and where small farmers can ensure food security for our communities.

Please take ACTION today. Call Senator Olympia Snowe's office at (800) 432-1599 and ask her to co-sponsor the TRADE Act. She needs to hear from Mainers. We need to keep jobs in our state and ensure a sustainable future. We can create more jobs in agriculture here in Maine by fixing the failed NAFTA model. For more information, visit www.maineairtrade.org ✿

GE ALFALFA continued from 1

USDA failed to conduct an environmental impact statement (EIS), as required by law, before deregulating the crop. The federal courts sided with CFS and banned GE alfalfa plantings until USDA analyzed the impacts of GE alfalfa on the environment, farmers and the public. The deadline for submitting public comments on the draft EIS, which recommends approving Monsanto's GE alfalfa was March 3.

USDA's EIS claims that organic consumers do not care about GE contamination of their food, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Consumer surveys show that 75 percent or more of respondents repeatedly say that they do not want to eat GE contaminated food and cite their desire to avoid GE food as one of the top five reasons for buying organic.

"GE alfalfa threatens the very fabric of the organic industry," adds George Siemon, one of the founding farmers and CEO of Organic Valley. "Organic consumers want seeds and products to remain unpolluted by GE."

Independent, empirical studies and past experience show that containment of GE pollen and seeds is not possible and GE alfalfa pollen can travel six miles or more in the air, via bees or other pollinators. Seeds can also travel long distances on harvesting equipment and on the boots and in the trucks of people who work in fields and transported by hay and seeds. More than 200 known cases of GE contamination have been documented within the last decade. The most serious and immediate cases of contamination are in canola (rapeseed) crops. Due to widespread contamination, canola crops and oil can no longer be

marketed as organic or non-GE in Western Canada.

"The continued deregulation of GE crops threatens our food supply and the diverse organic and conventional farming systems that have fed the

"The letter cites the inevitable contamination of organic and non-GE alfalfa hay and seeds and threats to the viability of organic dairies, livestock, and meat and dairy producers"

world's growing population for centuries," said Lisa J. Bunin, Ph.D., Organic Policy Coordinator at Center for Food Safety. "It is unconscionable for USDA to increasingly allow the concentration of our nation's seed supply in the hands of a few GE companies that produce a limited number of novel, pesticide-promoting seed varieties."

Despite the inevitable contamination from GE alfalfa, the EIS disavows this harm and places the entire burden for preventing contamination on non-GE farmers, with no protections for food producers, consumers and exporters. "If Roundup Ready Alfalfa is permitted to be sold commercially, the ripple effect would wipe out many organic and non-GE businesses, from organic seed and forage growers to organic dairy farmers and retailers," said Liana Hoodes, Director, National Organic Coalition. "Every American's right to cultivate, sell and eat non-GE

and organic food would no longer exist."

Even though the EIS acknowledges that GE alfalfa would increase Roundup herbicide use, since the vast majority of alfalfa farmers do not use any herbicides at all (93 percent), it omits the fact that planting GE alfalfa would require many farmers to use Roundup for the very first time. This would result in the spread of toxic chemicals in regions where such toxins were previously non-existent. Over the past 13 years, the planting of GE crops has significantly increased herbicide use on corn, soybeans and cotton by 383 million pounds. GE alfalfa deregulation would markedly add to that high toxic burden on the environment.

"Our genetic gene pool is extremely valuable, and we can't afford to destroy it by handing it over to the biotech companies," warns Conventional South Dakota alfalfa seed and hay grower, Chuck Noble. "If we've learned anything from Europe's potato famines when millions starved to death, humans need seed variety to protect against blight and famine. Genetic engineering severely compromises that diversity." ✿

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Letters to the Editor

Saving Seeds

Dear editor,

On recent winter surf trip to the Hawaiian Islands I was overwhelmed by the amount of land that is monocropped. Hawaii has been known for growing most of the world's pineapples and used to be one of the leading producers of sugar cane. Times have changed in the beautiful land of aloha. Pineapple fields still flourish in Hawaii but another crop has moved in to become the leading crop grown in the red volcanic soil: seeds. Corn seed is the leading seed estimated at \$169.3 million making up for 96 % of the total value of seed crops in 2008/2009. More than 6,000 acres of agriculture land is now used to produce seed (up 12 % from the prior year) in which 4,000 is used to grow seed for corn. Half of the 4,000 acres used to produce this seed corn are GMO, all of which is flown back to the mainland and sold to farmers mainly in the Midwest. The leading company sponsoring this operation is Monsanto. 97% of the GMO corn that Monsanto grows in Hawaii is their patented "Round-up Ready" variety. The Department of Agriculture in Hawaii welcomed this transition of land thinking it would diversify the agriculture business there. Monsanto employs just over eight hundred people at any given time and most of the profits are transferred to St. Louis, Missouri where they are based. The only people in the state to see any kind of big profit from them being there is the government. Approximately \$7 million in taxes were paid in 2009. The multinational giant plans on expanding its operation this year to an estimated 5,000 acres of GMO seed production.

As we have seen lately through "The World According to Monsanto" and "Food Inc." Monsanto is on the mission of controlling all seeds through patenting frankenstein crops. They already control most of the soybean seed sold to large commercial farms. If they have their way it will become harder and more difficult to access any other type of seed (conventional or organic). Farmers will have no choice except to purchase seed "legally OWNED" from this company. I had an occurrence last spring where there wasn't any organic snap pea seed to be found in April. Fedco, Johnny's, High Mowing and Seeds of Change, to name a few, were all sold out. Conventional soybean farmers are finding the same thing. They are being forced to buy Round-Up Ready soybeans each year, because it's illegal to save this seed, and not enough people are saving seeds to counter-balance Monsanto. In the next few years it is going to be crucial to start producing and saving more non-GMO seeds (preferably organic seeds). If we don't increase the acreage of non-GMO seed production Monsanto will dominate even more than what they control now. Saving seeds as our ancestors did has never been more important in human history.

Mahalo,
Travis Roderick, Living Roots Farm
Milbridge, ME

FarmLink

Dear Saving Seeds:

Your interview of Sonia Acevedo entitled "Voices of Maine's Landless" (Issue #8 Fall 2009/Winter 2010) brings to light a central issue shared by many would-be farmers around the world — access to farmland. Maine Farmland Trust (MFT) is addressing that issue here in Maine through our FarmLink program, which has helped over 50 farmers find land.

Ms. Acevedo's comments suggest that she does not understand fully how FarmLink works. She is not alone. I realize that MFT needs to better explain FarmLink's goals and structure.

MFT established FarmLink in order to: 1) encourage the transition of farmland to farmers rather than buyers who won't farm it; and 2) help farmers more easily find land to buy or lease.

MFT maintains a list of farms that the owners have asked us to help market. We include any such property that is suitable for some kind of farming. The properties on our list range widely in location, size and price. Some have existing farm infrastructure and some do not. At any given time, MFT's list includes 150- 200 properties.

It may well be that Ms. Acevedo could not find a property on the list that was suited to her. But that is not because FarmLink is biased toward any particular size or kind of farm. MFT lists ALL farm properties that are brought to us.

Nor does MFT require that FarmLink applicants complete business plans. We do actively encourage business planning, because our goal is to help new farms succeed. We make no excuses for that. But business plans are not required and we never hesitate to work with committed people, even those with minimal experience.

Ms. Acevedo says that she has heard of some young farmers who were "screwed" by unfavorable lease arrangements with older farmers. MFT does all that it can to provide good advice, but in the end, any sale or lease arrangement is in the hands of the two parties. We know of only a very few deals that have not gone well. The vast majority of what we hear is very favorable. Indeed, MFT's FarmLink is considered one of the most successful programs of its kind in the nation.



Ms. Acevedo is also critical that FarmLink applicants must join MFT for \$30/year. This amounts to \$2.50 each month for an updated farm list and active assistance from MFT. This is a tiny fraction of what the service actually costs. And yet, having applicants pay something does help ensure that this useful service continues. Still, we do not want any fee to be a barrier to participation, so we are open to alternative arrangements with anyone for whom the fee is too large.

I don't wish to put off anyone who is not pleased with FarmLink or any other MFT service. Indeed, I want to hear all feedback because it will help MFT improve. (Email me at jpjotti@mainefarmlandtrust.org)

But I also hope that people realize that just because a given MFT program may not be well suited to one person doesn't mean it isn't useful to another.

During the past 15 years, I've worked with over 600 farmers on a broad range of projects. Each is different. We need a wide assortment of different strategies to support agriculture in Maine.

I am an unabashed believer in the future of farming—starting with the great value I place in homesteading. But farming's future faces some significant challenges, because our economic system doesn't reflect environmental truths. All of us who believe that farming in Maine can be a model for elsewhere need to hang together.

John Piotti
Maine Farmland Trust

Sonia Acevedo Responds

Dear Mr. Piotti,

Thank you so much for clarifying about Maine Farmland Trust's work and missions—this is a much more thorough description of how MFT works than is described on the website and I'm sure will be helpful to farmers wanting to use this resource. I realize that MFT needs funds to be able to help keep land in farming and that property costs are high in many parts of the state, not just the farms listed on FarmLink, but this does not make the purchase of working farms any easier for younger farmers. The reality is, as far as property costs are concerned, people who bought farms in the sixties and seventies paid much less per acre in proportion to the average income than is possible today, and though these generational inequities are in no way MFT's fault or problem, it is a context and challenge that must be considered and acknowledged in the goal of keeping land in farming.

I hear that ultimately sale and lease negotiations are between the two parties involved, and that MFT does not consider these relationships their responsibility, but I have to say that doing a little bit more research and being more involved in the communities where these farms are located would be helpful in advising young and old farmers in making good choices in a partnership. A young farmer who thinks that their dream of farming is finally realized through a situation like this, only to end up losing money, sweat equity, and then not

ending up with a farm is devastating. Farmers young and old who encounter situations like this lose their hope in farming as a viable lifestyle and career, and this hurts all of us. When the stories and rumors fly about these bad deals, it hurts both farming communities and organizations like yours. Everyone involved should do as much homework as they can to avoid possible misfortune.

Fixing the annual pay membership is easy—sliding scale, based on income and need. Two dollars and fifty cents a month is a huge amount for some people, even if it doesn't seem like a lot to you. Perhaps it doesn't matter—if two dollars and fifty cents a day is too much to pay, it is likely that those same people would not be able to afford property on Farm Link anyway. However, sliding scale policies at all levels demonstrate a strong and ethical commitment to equal access and eradicating classism. It also encourages philanthropy from those who have the available means to support non-profits doing good work such as yourselves. I worked with a Maine based group called No Class for years, and we have a lot of literature about sliding scale policies, how they work, and what they demonstrate to the public. Feel free to email noclass@riseup.net for more information.

I appreciate your response to my interview and I apologize for being divisive. I do think that MFT does do some wonderful work. I guess I am an idealist—it makes me grieve to think that the only way that we can save the land from development and keep it in farming is to use the same business models that have gotten our land and our economy in the predicament they're in. Seeing and knowing how hard farmers have to struggle to eke out a living doing the dirty work that only 2% of our population does—feeding our people—breaks my heart and fills me with anger. Maybe MFT can't address these issues through their work, but I do wish that someone could. There are so many wonderful people who want to free the land and free ourselves, by growing food for their families and their communities, and many of them are not concerned with making it into a business or into a profit, but want to do it because protecting farmland and homesteading culture is the right and just thing to do—and they can't because they don't have the land or the resources to do so. I hope that you keep these ideals of self-determination and food sovereignty close to your heart as you and MFT continue to do the wonderful work you do.

Thank you,
Sonia Acevedo ☘

Saving Seeds
Welcomes Your
Letters to the Editor

E-mail them to
bob@foodformainefuture.org
or mail to: PO Box 51,
Sedgwick, ME 04676

Maine's Raw Milk Producers Misinformed, to be "Assisted into Compliance"

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Seth H. Bradstreet, III
 COMMISSIONER

Hal Prince
 Director

November 25, 2009

From: Hal Prince, Director

To: Milk Distributors

Subject: Dairy Inspection Program and distributors of "not pasteurized" (raw) milk

I would like to take this opportunity to notify all licensed milk distributors of recent changes to the dairy inspection program in the Department of Agriculture. Recently the dairy inspection program was moved back to the Division of Quality Assurance & Regulation. As some of you may know, historically the dairy inspection program was housed in the Division of Regulations along with the food safety program but was moved to the Division of Animal Health in the mid 1990's.

The recent change moved the dairy inspection program back to the Division of QA&R. It is the belief of the Department that dairy inspection is a good fit with our Division. Both programs share a common mission and goal of regulatory licensing and sanitation inspection directed toward protecting public health by assuring that all food products are processed using Good Manufacturing Practices under the best possible sanitary conditions.

As a result of this move we have been reviewing the statutes, rules and policies that govern the production, sale and distribution of milk in the State of Maine. The reasons for this review are twofold. First we hope to familiarize ourselves with the needs and challenges of the dairy program; and secondly we are looking for any inconsistencies or areas in the program that needed to be updated in light of ever evolving food safety standards.

As a result of our initial review we have identified two areas that, in our opinion, need to be addressed immediately and should not wait for the completion of our final review.

The first item of concern involves the licensing and inspection of "Milk Distributors" specifically the distributors of "not pasteurized" (raw) milk. In our review there seems to be confusion among businesses and inspection staff alike as to whether or not a license and inspection is needed by those "not pasteurized" (raw) milk processors who do not actively advertise the sale of

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"not pasteurized" (raw) milk.

CMR 01-001, Chapter 329, Rules Governing Maine Milk and Milk Products, defines a Milk Distributor as "any person who offers for sale or sells to another any milk or milk products in its final form."

In the rule, there is no exemption of any kind that allows the sale of milk or milk products without a valid license. As such we will begin immediately to identify those processors who are operating without a license and assist them into compliance through proper inspection and licensing.

The second item concerns chronic violations of bacterial standards for "not pasteurized" (raw) milk. Under the current rule if 2 of the last 4 milk samples exceed the bacterial standard a warning letter is issued notifying the processor. When 3 of the last 5 samples exceed the bacterial standard a stop product distribution letter is issued. After a satisfactory inspection by the State dairy inspector, the plant can resume distribution of product. However, the product is then subject to accelerated sampling (1 sample per week for 3 weeks). Past history indicates that in some cases the cause of the positive sample is not adequately addressed. These violations continue and the process is repeated with no resolution.

To help us better understand what bacteria we are dealing with in these cases, we are planning to start a sample survey of those processors who experience chronic violations to determine if there are pathogens present. If pathogens are found as a result of this survey, products involved will be considered adulterated and subject to immediate withdrawal from sale until corrections and negative samples can be achieved.

In light of the increased national incidence of food borne illness outbreaks and heightened public awareness of food safety concerns we believe we must be proactive when dealing with potential public health risks in food. Allowing food to enter into commerce with known positive test results for bacteria places both the business and the Department in an indefensible position if an illness were to occur. The result of such an incident would have a negative impact on the entire dairy industry in the State of Maine.

We appreciate your understanding and anticipated assistance as this program evolves and improves.

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Raw Milk is a Complete and Balanced Food

by Sheryl Walters, citizen journalist – reprinted from *Natural News* – www.naturalnews.com

Raw milk is gaining in popularity among people who are looking to eat a more natural and less processed diet. Although there is a large amount of variation in raw milk, true raw milk is milk from organic grass-fed cows that is cooled to 36-38 degrees Fahrenheit and then bottled for consumption. No homogenization, pasteurization, or filtering is part of the process. Raw milk that adheres to this definition is a complete and balanced food with healing properties and many health benefits.

Pasteurization has been used since the 1890's to kill bacteria in milk including salmonella, listeria, campylobacter, e.coli, and brucella. However, in addition to the killing of the "bad" bacteria such as these, pasteurization also kills "good" bacteria such as lactobacillus. These good bacteria actually kill the bad bacteria that can contaminate milk and make people sick. Cows that are fed fresh grass are consuming the nutrients necessary to produce milk with a healthy amount of good bacteria thereby producing milk that is safe without pasteurization and full of health benefits.

Besides reducing the risk of food-borne illness, the good bacteria

"The killing of the "bad" bacteria [through] pasteurization also kills "good" bacteria such as lactobacillus."

—Sheryl Walters

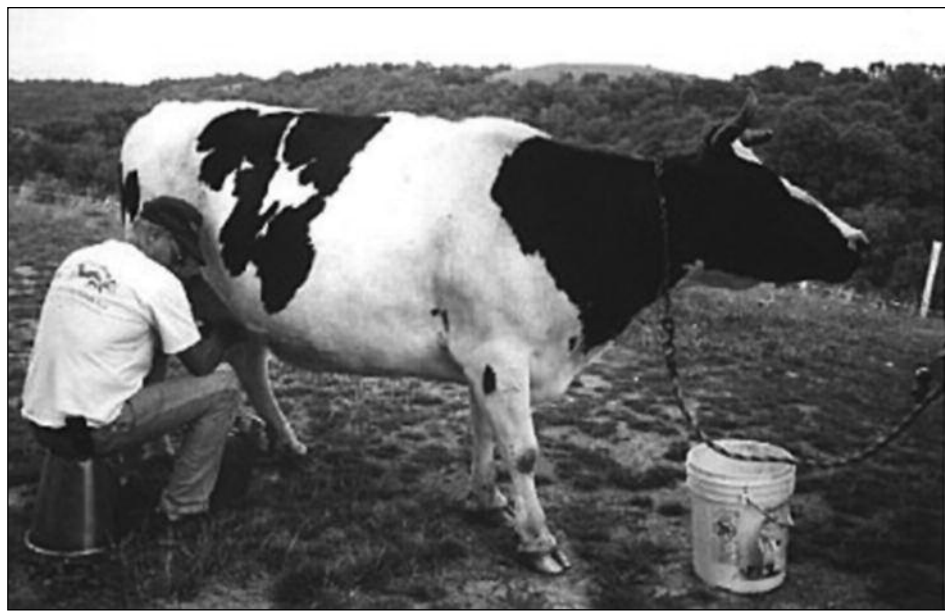
found in raw milk is beneficial (especially after the fermentation process that turns milk into yogurt or kefir) for the digestive tract because they produce enzymes which help break down

protein. This can be especially beneficial for people with digestive issues that are related to medication, illness, or age. Other types of good bacteria found in raw milk work to change lactose (milk sugar) into lactic acid. Lactic acid increases absorption of iron, phosphorus, and calcium.

Another benefit of raw milk is the high amount of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA). CLA is a polyunsaturated omega-6 fatty acid found in milk from grass-fed cows and is known to



The prohibition of raw milk in some states has led to underground milk distribution



Is this good enough for you?

boost metabolism, reduce insulin resistance, strengthen the immune system, reduce allergic reactions to food, build muscle, and reduce abdominal fat. Grass fed cows are known to have three to five times more CLA than cows that are grain fed.

Since raw milk is not available commercially in the U.S., except some rare stores in New Mexico, California, and Connecticut, (*and Maine!* – Ed.) it takes some research to find a supplier. When deciding upon a supplier for raw milk it is imperative to be educated about the diet of the cows. The safety and health benefits of raw milk vary greatly based on diet. The milk from grain fed

cows affects fat levels, nutrient levels, and must be tested more often than milk from grass-fed cows for safety. Ideally, cows should be fed organic fresh grass if possible.

The health benefits of raw milk are numerous. Good bacteria and CLA make raw milk an excellent choice for consumers who choose to include dairy in their diet.

Sources:

www.raw-milk-facts.com
www.realmilk.com
www.rawmilk.org ☼

Obama's Hollow Rhetoric-The Trail Of Broken Promises

by Jim Goodman

"And it means ensuring that the policies being shaped at the Departments of Agriculture and Interior are designed to serve not big agribusiness or Washington influence peddlers, but the family farmers and the American People."

— President-elect Barack Obama, December 17, 2008, Chicago, Illinois.

The message was one of hope, the words of a newly elected President echoing the Populism of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the promise of John F. Kennedy. It stopped there, the delivery of the promise fell short.

We have gotten a New Deal, albeit one that is more protective of those who caused the economic and agricultural crises than of those who suffer from them. We have also gotten a new version of "The Best and the Brightest" in the Obama Administration and their faulty counsel extends beyond war into food and trade policy.

The campaign promises were not worth the notepads they are written on. The promises were broken and business at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will carry on much as it did during the Bush Administration.

Instead of going outside the agribusiness and agrochemical industries, Obama has kept the revolving door spinning and appointed the very lobbyists and special interests he said would find no home in his administration.

Monsanto stalwarts Michael Taylor, special assistant to the FDA Commissioner for food safety and Roger Beachy, head of National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Rajiv Shah, head of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) where his pro-biotech leanings will continue to be pushed on the developing

world. Perhaps it is a good fit, as President Obama noted "The mission of USAID is to advance America's interests by strengthening our relationships abroad". However, advancing America's interests and giving real aid to those in need are not the same thing. Advancing interests implies control and empire building.

Islam Siddiqui, Chief Agriculture Negotiator, office of U.S. Trade Representative, is a particularly troubling

Japan's desire to mandate labeling of Genetically Modified (GM) food and he pushed to permit pesticide testing on children. In his world consumers should be forced to accept whatever food products are thrown at them.

Forced trade, telling countries they must accept our products whether they want them or not is not trade, it is nothing short of blackmail.

His "public service" career has been dedicated to selling more pesticides

"Instead of going outside the agribusiness and agrochemical industries, Obama has kept the revolving door spinning."

—Jim Goodman

nomination. He is no friend of consumers, considering his most recent employment at CropLife America (CLA), the pesticide industries main trade association. As a registered lobbyist and vice president of regulatory affairs, Siddiqui was responsible for setting and selling CLA's international and domestic agenda which, simply put, was to weaken regulations on pesticides and agricultural chemicals worldwide. He is no friend of farmers either, and not just organic farmers, even though he has a long history of distaste for organic agriculture. He promotes agribusiness, chemical companies, processors and grain marketers who make their profits by buying low, processing and selling high. In his world, a farmers job is to maintain corporate profits.

As an unabashed "free trader" [Siddiqui] is a strong supporter of the World Trade Organization and its ability to strong-arm countries into accepting unwanted U.S. imports. He openly derided the European Union's rejection of hormone-treated beef,

and GM seed to farmers world-wide and easing restrictions on their use. The beneficiaries of these policies were not farmers or consumers but the agribusiness corporations that Siddiqui worked for. That is not public service, that is promoting private interest.

Siddiqui has not worked in the best interests of farmers or consumers, rather he has consistently promoted the interests of multi-national corporations, grain companies, meat processors and chemical companies over those of the farmer or consumer. If appointed, why should we believe that that the leopard will suddenly be changing its spots?

President Obama noted as a candidate "We'll tell ConAgra that it's [USDA] not the Department of Agribusiness. We're going to put the peoples interests ahead of the special interests." Just another empty promise.

Jim Goodman is an organic dairy farmer from Wonalowoc WI and board member of Family Farm Defenders. ☘



Saving Seeds Ad Policy

We will accept paid ads from all non-profit organizations, educational institutions and locally-owned commercial businesses who support sustainable agriculture. Submissions may be made in PDF, TIF or scanable hard copy, gray scale only. Digital images, including those embedded in PDFs, should be at 180 dpi. Payment must be received before the ad can go to print unless prior arrangements are made. Ads submitted without payment or prior arrangement are held until the next issue or until payment is sent. Food for Maine's Future publications are not "ad rags", so space is limited. Ads will be run on a first-come, first-served basis. We reserve the right to refuse any ad.

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NEWS & NOTES

PANEL CLEARS MODIFIED CORN

Mechele Cooper, *Kennebec Journal*

FAIRFIELD (Mar 6, 2010) - The state Board of Pesticides Control agreed Friday to add a new Bt corn product to the list of genetically engineered seeds grown in Maine. Maine now allows 19 Bt products to be planted in fields now that Monsanto, a multinational biotech company, won its bid to register its new *Bacillus thuringiensis* corn here. Chuck Ravis, professor of environmental science and ecology at Thomas College, was the sole member of the board who voted against the genetically engineered seed.

Ravis said he has "issues" with Monsanto's business practices and expressed concern about risks to human health and the environment. "I do believe there's disagreement in the potential outcome of using these products," Ravis said at the meeting. "If we don't know that, I think we shouldn't be approving this."

Daniel Simonds, a board member who is a forestry consultant, said early in the meeting he hoped to focus on the issue at hand - whether to register the new Bt product - not questions about procedure. "I have concerns about the process in which we approve these things, but we should have that discussion at a future planning session," Simonds said. "We shouldn't delay this."

John Jemison Jr., water quality and soil specialist with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, said it was his understanding that the new Bt corn will broaden insect control for insects not found in Maine. "As long as we're not approving this for bugs we don't have here, that was my concern," Jemison said. "I can tell you for the fall army worm, Bt 11 did not work very well. If this works better than that, it would meet the need, if it's indeed better."

Read full story at http://www.kjonline.com/news/panel-clears-modified-corn_2010-03-05.html

RESTAURANT OPPORTUNITIES CENTER MAINE LOOKS BEHIND THE KITCHEN DOOR

New study looks at restaurant working conditions in Maine

Behind the Kitchen Door: Low Road Jobs, High Road Opportunities in Maine's Growing Restaurant Industry was conceived of and designed by the Maine Restaurant Industry Coalition - a broad gathering of academics, policy analysts, worker advocates, worker organizers, unions, restaurant workers, and restaurant industry employers. This report represents one of the most comprehensive research analyses of the restaurant industry in Maine.

continued on page 6

NEWS & NOTES CONTINUED

Perhaps the industry's most important contribution to the state's economy is the thousands of job opportunities and career options it provides. In 2009, the industry accounted for over \$1.5 billion in sales. Since 1995, employment growth in the food services sector has outpaced that of the state overall. Restaurants employ more than 46,000 workers in the state – 7.6% of the state's total employment. Since formal credentials are not a requirement for the majority of restaurant jobs, the industry provides employment opportunities to new immigrants, whose skills and prior experience outside the United States may not be recognized by other employers, workers who have no formal qualifications, young people just starting out in the workforce.

While there are a few "good" restaurant jobs in the restaurant industry, and opportunities to earn a living wage, the majority are "bad jobs," characterized by very low wages, few benefits, and limited opportunities for upward mobility or increased income. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median hourly wages for restaurant workers in Maine is only \$8.92 including tips, which means that half of all Maine restaurant workers actually earn less.

View or download the full report at <http://www.rocunited.org/what-we-know>

NEW DOCUMENTARY LOOKS AT PESTICIDE IMPACT ON HONEYBEES

In their new film, *Nicotine Bees*, producers Kevin Hansen and Krista Keenan explore the connection between pesticide use and the phenomena known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). At issue in the film are the nicotinyl insecticides (also known as neonicotinoids) being used in a new way - as seed coatings. For years, farmers have been spraying neonicotinoids onto their crops to stop insect infestation. Now agribusiness corporations have acquired patents to coat their proprietary corn seeds with these neonicotinoids.

Neil Carman, Ph.D., scientific advisor for the Sierra Club explains, "These neonicotinoid coatings are extremely persistent. They enter the plant and are present in pollen and on droplets of water on leaves."

David Hackenberg, former president of the American Beekeeping Federation, has been urging the U.S. regulatory agencies to suspend these seed treatments. "Look at what's time based. The massive bee decimation started when regulatory agencies rubber stamped the use of neonicotinoid spraying and coating," he said.

"Sierra Club joins the concern of beekeepers," said Laurel Hopwood, chairperson for Sierra Club's Genetic Engineering Action

continued on page 8

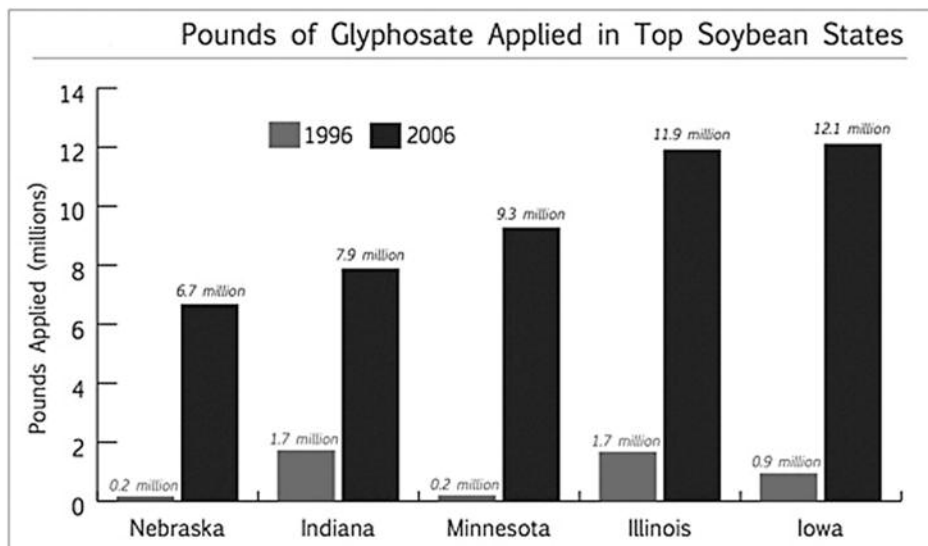
Concentration in the Seed Industry Leads to Less Choice, Higher Prices for U.S. Farmers

New report by Farmer to Farmer Campaign on Genetic Engineering sheds light on seed industry practices

American farmers are feeling the effects of a concentrated seed industry. Seed options are diminishing while prices increase at historic rates. A new report, *Out of hand: Farmers face the consequences of a consolidated seed industry*, examines these troubling trends, substantiating the U.S. Department of Justice's investigation into alleged anti-competitive conduct in the seed industry.

"Farmers are facing fewer choices and significantly higher prices in seed," says Kristina Hubbard, author of the report. "Seed options narrow when a handful of companies dominate the marketplace." Discussions on seed industry concentration typically center on the dominant firm, the Monsanto Company, which achieved the No. 1 position by capturing the markets for most major crops through a series of acquisitions and mergers. Monsanto accounts for 60 percent of the corn and soybean seed market through direct seed sales and seed trait licensing agreements with other companies. Monsanto's biotechnology traits are planted on more than 90 percent of U.S. soybean acreage and more than 80 percent of U.S. corn acreage.

The report outlines events that led



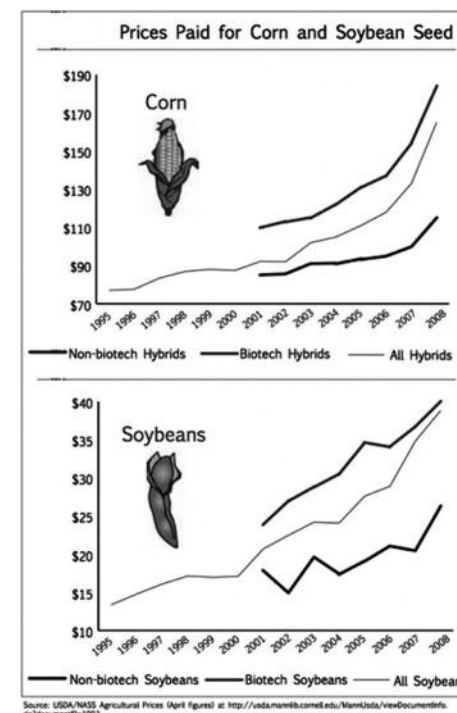
Source: USDA/NASS, Agricultural Chemical Usage 2006 Field Crops Summary, May 2007 at http://usda.nass.com/usa/nass/AgChemUse/2006/2007/AgChemUse05162007_revision.txt; Agricultural Chemical Usage 1996 Field Crops Summary, September 1997 at <http://usda.nass.com/usa/nass/AgChemUse/1996/1997/AgChemUse09031997.txt>

to extensive concentration, including weak antitrust law enforcement and Supreme Court decisions that allowed genetically engineered crops and other plant products to be patented. These factors have created unprecedented ownership and control over plant genetic resources in major field crops.

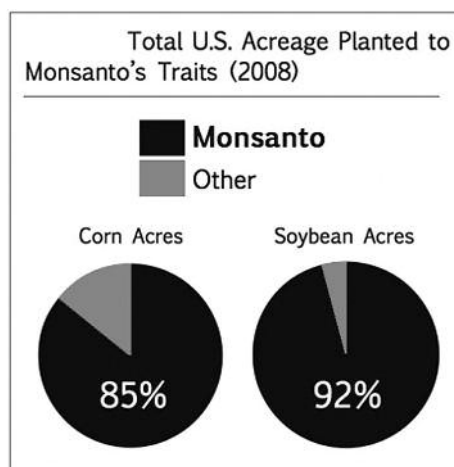
"We are encouraged that the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Justice have launched a joint investigation into anticompetitive practices in agriculture," says Bill Wenzel, national director of the Farmer to Farmer Campaign on Genetic Engineering. "We believe this report will shed light on the severe negative impacts that these practices have had on producers and provide insight on what changes in policy are necessary to protect farmers' rights and interests."

To view or download the report visit www.farmertofarmercampaign.org.

The Farmer to Farmer Campaign on a Genetic Engineering is a national network of farm organizations that serve as a voice for family farmers on agricultural biotechnology issues. Farmer to Farmer seeks to



build a farmer driven campaign focused on concerns around agricultural biotechnology and to provide a national forum for farmers on these issues. ☼



Sources: USDA/ERS, 2009, "Adoption of Genetically Engineered Crops in the U.S.," <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/biotechcrops/>; Monsanto's Supplemental Toolkit for Investors (April 2009) at <http://www.monsanto.com/investors/presentations.asp>

Facts on the Corporate Consolidation of Food and Farming

Market concentration.

Over the last 10 – 20 years agribusiness has become one of the most consolidated, anti-competitive American industries. In the U.S. 85 percent of all our beef is slaughtered by four companies, half of corn seed is controlled by two companies and 40 percent of our milk supply is in the hands of just one corporation.

The law.

Federal antitrust law prohibits corporations from colluding to suppress competition, combining to reduce competition and from engaging in predatory conduct to maintain a monopoly (e.g. price fixing, coordinated blacklists, divvying up geographic or consumer markets, buying up industry sectors).

If the top four companies in any industry control over 50% of the market, it is no longer freely competitive. Monopolies must have a very high market share – upwards of 60% – 70% ownership by one company, engage in anti-competitive practices, or coordinate with competitors on pricing to come under scrutiny.

Lax enforcement.

Regulators have been turning a blind eye to agribusiness. When Dean Foods, which has a monopoly on milk in many US cities, merged with another milk processor, regulators said it would "result in unilateral price increases"^[1] but let the deal go through anyway. In the last two years the price farmers receive for their milk was cut in half, driving thousands out of business.

Prices at the checkout line remained steady.^[2]

For a who's who in agribusiness concentration, check out the Heffernan Report, from the University of Missouri and the National Farmer's Union. Why Bust the Trust?

Price manipulation.

When companies get too powerful, corporations and their CEO's can set prices.

• *Monsanto for example, raised the price of some of its corn seed by 25% last year. The company holds patents on genes in some 80% of corn seed in the US.*^[3]

Corporate welfare.

As corporate concentration has grown, agribusiness monopolies have

See **CORPORATE CONSOLIDATION** on page 7

Bust the Trust to take Back Control of Our Food System

by Siena Chrisman

Trust: 1) reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc., of a person or thing; 2) any large industrial or commercial corporation or combination having a monopolistic or semimonopolistic control over the production of some commodity or service.

There are 2 million farmers and 300 million consumers in the US. Standing in the middle are a handful of corporations who control just about everything that happens to our food between the farm and our plate -- how much it costs, how it's grown, where it comes from, what's in it, and who sells it. Most of what probably matters to you about why food isn't healthier, safer, tastier, or all around better is affected by that narrow bottleneck of power between producers and consumers.

Standard economics holds that if the top four companies in any industry control over 50% of the market, that industry is no longer freely competitive. Right now, the top four companies control 85% of the nation's beef, 70% of pork, and 60% of the nation's poultry. Three corporations process over 70% of the nation's soy. Just one company controls 40% of our milk supply, and Monsanto holds patents on 80% of corn seed. Our food system has become one of the least competitive sectors of the marketplace.

Fair markets are supposed to be protected by federal antitrust laws, which prohibit corporations from anti-competitive behavior such as collusion, excessive mergers, and predatory conduct like price-fixing. In reality, last year's near-collapse of the world financial markets made it clear that federal laws don't always work to curb corporate power. Indeed, the world food crisis, in the headlines just before the financial crisis hit, spotlighted the level of concentrated power of the world's biggest agribusinesses: in the winter of 2007/2008, the same period that saw lengthening lines at food pantries, tough times for farmers, and populist rebellions around the world protesting



Jeri Lynn Bakken photo

George Naylor, Iowa corn and soybean farmer profiled in Omnivore's Dilemma, speaks to a packed house in Ankeny, Iowa

skyrocketing food prices, the world's three largest grain producers reported profit increases ranging from 67% to 86%.

The world food crisis is out of the headlines, but it is clear that there is a growing crisis over who controls our food. The US Working Group on the Food Crisis, of which WhyHunger is a founding member, is a broad-based alliance working to promote real solutions to fix the broken food system. As part of its unifying theme of ending poverty by rebuilding local food economies, the Working Group has identified corporate control of the food system to be a primary barrier to building just, prosperous, community-based food economies.

We now have an unprecedented opportunity to speak out against corporate control. The Justice Department and Department of Agriculture are conducting an investigation this year into the issue of corporate concentration in the food system. They have scheduled five public listening sessions around the country this year—the first is on March 12 near Des Moines—and they are accepting public comments on how corporate concentration affects all

of us.

The US Working Group on the Food Crisis commends the government for initiating these investigations and sincerely hopes the administration will use this opportunity to address decades of lax enforcement of antitrust

“They told heartbreaking stories – the 29th anniversary of one man’s parents was a farm foreclosure.”

regulations and restore fairness to the marketplace. This is also a critical moment for all of us to stay informed and take action—you can be sure that agribusiness will put up a fight to maintain the status quo, and so we all must be prepared to speak out loudly in favor of a fair and democratic food system.

Report from Iowa

Last night [March 11] in Ankeny, Iowa, just north of Des Moines, a standing-room-only crowd of over 250 people called on the Justice Department and USDA to “bust up big ag!” and put the needs of people before corporations. [The event was held the night before] the official listening session where the government agencies will hear from all interested parties on the issue of corporate concentration in the food system — particularly, this round addresses “Issues of Concern to Farmers” — but the scheduled panels are heavy on business and light on actual farmers. Several local groups organized Thursday's town hall as a venue for farmers to voice their real concerns. The evening began with a panel of independent farmers from Iowa, Wisconsin, and Missouri addressing concentration in seeds, dairy, and live-

stock; a representative from the United Food and Commercial Workers Union; and good food advocates talking about consumer issues (I had the great privilege to be one of those last speakers).

And then the floor was open to public comments. About 50 people spoke, almost all of them farmers. They told heartbreaking stories: The 29th anniversary of one man's parents was a farm foreclosure. “The American Dream has turned into the American nightmare” for a southern Iowa dairy farmer, whose milk prices have been so low he can't afford his feed costs. The 15-year-old son of a fifth generation dairy farmer wants to become the sixth generation, but if things don't change in the next six months, they're not going to have a farm.

Things are dire for farmers — as they are for so many of people who don't have control over their food — but they're ready to fight. They made powerful demands of the Department of Justice and Congress to enforce antitrust laws and break up the hugely concentrated ag industries. But government isn't quite the last hope; people are. A family farmer from near Des Moines wanted to talk about power: “Industry cannot turn one wheel unless people make those machines work,” he said. “We have the power here, and we need to understand what that power means.”

We all need to start recognizing our power. The millions of us around the country talking about food are telling different stories, but with the same thread: people, not corporations, need to control what we eat. From New York to Iowa and far beyond, we need to keep talking and growing our power. Talk to each other, to strangers—and definitely talk to the government.

Siena Chrisman works with WhyHunger based in New York City. Founded in 1975, WHY is a leader in the fight against hunger and poverty in the United States and around the world. www.whyhunger.org. ☘

CORPORATE CONSOLIDATION continued

become experts at pulling profits from public coffers.

- Archer Daniels Midland is “the biggest recipient of corporate welfare in US history,” according to the Conservative Cato Institute.^[4] ADM, and two other corporate giants process 71% of the nation's soy.^[5] It is those companies, and not farmers, that are the main beneficiaries of this year's proposed \$12.7 billion a year in agricultural subsidies.^[6]

- WalMart, the largest US grocery chain, is especially adept at using taxpayers to prop up their bottom line. The State of California for example, shells out \$86 million a year in health care and other benefits to subsidize the sub-poverty salaries of WalMart employees.^[7] The top five companies sell about half of America's groceries.^[8]

- From 2003-2007, US taxpayers shelled out nearly \$200 million to clean up after industrial dairy and hog operations alone.^[9]

Deterred innovation & stymied science.

A few chemical and pharmaceutical giants now control the seed industry, which once relied on America's land



grant and public university system for research and development. Since corporate labs have taken control over seed research, agricultural innovation for the public good has fallen off as fewer and fewer technologies displace generations of field-based research. Proprietary control also allows these corporations to prevent independent scientific inquiry into their product's claims to superiority and safety.

Obscene profits.

In the 1950's farmers received between 40 and 50% of every dollar consumers spent on food. Today they receive about 20%.^[10] With this farmers still have to pay for inputs and labor. During the height of the global food crisis in 2007, monopolistic agribusinesses saw their profits skyrocket. Monsanto's profits jumped 45%; Mosaic Fertilizer, a subsidiary of Cargill, saw profits jump a staggering 1200%.^[11]

We all pay the price

The consequences are simple — farmers, consumers and taxpayers pay to line the pockets of some of America's most powerful companies, while corporations limit the opportunity to bring back our prosperous, healthy food systems.

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NEWS & NOTES CONTINUED

Team. "It's unfortunate that regulatory agencies are using double speak. They claim to protect our food supply - yet they continue to approve seed coatings without the proper studies."

According to a Sierra Club press release, one out of every three bites of food that we consume is due to the work of honeybees, serving as crucial pollinators. Hopwood calls on every family to view Nicotine Bees and to take action. "The loss of honeybees will leave a huge void in the kitchens of the American people and an estimated loss of 14 billion dollars to farmers," said Hopwood. "We expect the EPA to do their job."

RAPID RISE IN SEED PRICES DRAWS U.S. SCRUTINY

William Neuman, *New York Times On-line*

(Mar 12, 2010) During the depths of the economic crisis last year, the prices for many goods held steady or even dropped. But on American farms, the picture was far different, as farmers watched the price they paid for seeds skyrocket. Corn seed prices rose 32 percent; soybean seeds were up 24 percent.

Such price increases for seeds — the most important purchase a farmer makes each year — are part of an unprecedented climb that began more than a decade ago, stemming from the advent of genetically engineered crops and the rapid concentration in the seed industry that accompanied it.

The price increases have not only irritated many farmers, they have caught the attention of the Obama administration. The Justice Department began an antitrust investigation of the seed industry last year, with an apparent focus on Monsanto, which controls much of the market for the expensive bioengineered traits that make crops resistant to insect pests and herbicides.

The investigation is just one facet of a push by the Obama administration to take a closer look at competition — or the lack thereof — in agriculture, from the dairy industry to livestock to commodity crops, like corn and soybeans.

View full story at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/12/business/12seed.html?hp>

FOOD AND BEVERAGE GIANTS COMMIT TO GE-FREE FOOD

In Australia, that is.

Launched by celebrated chefs Martin Boetz and Margaret Fulton, and Clover Moore MP, Lord Mayor of Sydney as part of the Sydney International Food Festival, the Greenpeace Truefood Guide rates over one thousand of Australia's top food and beverage brands for the presence of GE ingredients.

continued on page 9

Growing Habitat, Embracing Diversity

by CR Lawn

Part I of II.

Organic, sustainable, biodynamic, locavore...CSA, farmers' markets, buying clubs, convivias...We like to think we are pioneers in building local and sustainable food systems. Yet, back in December, 1867, seven men led by Oliver Hudson Kelley, a mason and a clerk with the federal Bureau of Agriculture, established the National Order of the Patrons of Husbandry, better known to us as the Grange. Persuaded by his niece Caroline Hall, Kelley admitted women as complete equals, a radical departure from 19th century custom. Without benefit of blog or internet, automobile or telephone, the new farm organization grew at an astonishing rate. Arriving in Maine in 1873, it mushroomed to 64 chapters boasting 2,000 total members by the end of 1874. By 1876 the order had grown to over 228 Maine granges, membership sextupling to 12,000, part of a nationwide enrollment of 850,000! Grangers established thousands of local chapters, built halls that became the centers of community life in many small towns across the country where they held dances, potlucks, picnics, fairs and social gatherings, but also lobbied, championing rural free delivery and the new Agricultural Extension service, and rallying around improving rural schools.

They were a fraternal order, an agricultural forum, a service organization, an economic cooperative, a political rallying point and a social gathering all rolled into one. They started insurance companies and other cooperative group purchasing ventures. During the Panic of 1873 so many farmers gathered to air their complaints on the 4th of July that it became known as the Farmers 4th of July. Their issues? High costs, burdensome debts, small profits, monopolistic railroads and grain elevators, predatory banking practices. Sound familiar? In four midwestern states they became powerful enough to pass the so-called Granger Laws to curb the powers of the railroads by regulating maximum rates, upheld as constitutional by the famous Supreme Court case *Munn vs. Illinois* (1876).

They were still the most important community institution when I was a little kid growing up in rural Vermont in 1950. In a small town with maybe 300-400 residents, the potluck Grange suppers of that era attracted 60-100 people. Kids ran around having fun, a few younger ones already wrapped in blankets asleep. Our contra dances and buying club breakdowns in the '70s were reminiscent, but on a much smaller scale.

Grange halls still dot our rural landscapes. As of 2008 170 stood in small Maine towns, from Ashland to Turner, from Benton to Ripley. Yet these buildings are usually empty, underused and but a shell of what they meant to folks a century or more ago. National Grange membership is less than a fourth of its twin peaks in the 1870s and 1930s. What happened?

The dictionary defines habitat as the region where a plant or animal naturally grows or lives, its native environment, the place where it is ordinarily found. When the Grange was founded, more than 1 in every two persons was a farmer. The Grange engaged farmers on all levels: social, educational, economic, cultural and agricultural, and



Deer Isle Grange #296

farming was so prevalent that any institution representing farmers was certain to be strong. Strong? Imagine the strength required to erect all those halls in the 1870s! Economic, social and cultural strength.

Today only 1 person in 40 is a farmer. The diversified farms that were characteristic of the era of the founding of the Grange became so scarce that until their recent revival, they looked nearly as endangered as the thousands of vegetable and fruit varieties and animal breeds that became extinct in the Twentieth century. The Grange was

ties tight-knit. Food was not an anonymous substance found on supermarket shelves.

The Grange declined when food systems became anonymous and unaccountable. On the primary level we grow our seeds and our food crops ourselves. We KNOW how they were grown, when they were harvested, what variety they were and how fresh they are. On the second level we forge direct relationships with the growers and creators of our food, through direct-marketing institutions such as CSA, farmers markets and restaurants

“Biodiversity cannot thrive in an atmosphere of concentrated corporate control because the corporations...concentrate their research on a small number of major crops that can make them the most money.” —CR Lawn

such an important part of the farmers' and therefore the society's social and cultural heritage that it provided habitat for farmers. In the last hundred years, farmers have lost habitat, both literally and figuratively: literally as thousands of acres of prime agricultural land have been turned into suburban developments or paved over, figuratively as the cultural context for diversified farming disappeared, culminating in the loss even of respect for what was once considered a noble calling. People didn't want to sweat, get their hands dirty, or even make things anymore. Instead we were to become a service economy. At its nadir, probably the 1960s, no bigger insult than the epithet "farmer" could be hurled at our high school athletes as we bused from relatively bucolic Cortland, New York (once a center for sauerkraut production) to the city of Syracuse to take on (and usually defeat) their teams.

The history of the Grange teaches us that the ultimate success of our movement is far from inevitable. Powerful forces, cultural, political and economic, are poised against us. We need to be creative to fight those trends that narrow our habitat and to build on those that allow us to expand it and thrive. To have any chance to prevail, our focus must be broad and cut across the culture. Culture is about relationships and relationships are at the heart of healthy systems. The Grange thrived when farmers were neighbors and communi-

where we literally get to meet and converse with those who grow and prepare it. These relationships are based on what we learn about these farms, restaurants and operations and the trust that builds from that knowledge. If we trust our CSA farmer, then the last thing we need is more governmental or institutional regulation of her. At the third level the relationship is one removed. We shop at the co-op store that buys from the farmer and advertises her operation through pictures and shelf talkers. Or eat at the restaurant that features identified farmers and their products. Or patronize the seed catalog that buys tomato seed from that seed farmer in our area whom we know. In the fourth level, the food has become co-mingled and anonymous. It may have been bagged and traveled thousands of miles. We have no way to know how long ago it was picked and no one whom we can ask. No wonder many consumers trapped in level 4 want more food safety regulations. If you don't know who grew the beef you eat or the bagged leafy greens from California, how can you know they are safe? Wouldn't you want them to be regulated to reduce the chance that they make you sick? And yet, these four food systems are so very different in scale and end result that I cannot consider that the carrot that I grew myself or purchased from the farmer I know and trust is equal to the one bagged in celo at our supermarket,

variety unknown, grown God knows where and by whom, with what chemicals in the soil, what preservatives, or whatever. And yet proposed food safety laws or metrics treat them all alike, based on one size fits all.

Long Pie Pumpkin, Marfax bean, Gilfeather Turnip, Boothby's Blonde cucumber. All regional heirloom varieties with rich stories. The opposite of anonymous, and yet, all at one recent time in danger of extinction. This year we are working with RAFT (Restoring America's Food Traditions) and Chefs Collaborative to get these varieties out to farmers who are growing them, marketing them, introducing them to chefs. These and many more are in Fedco's catalog. More, such as the Weissnicht Ukrainian tomato, maintained by Scott Weisnicht in Wisconsin, who also helped save Pride of Wisconsin melon from extinction, are in our pipeline to be offered in future catalogs. Hundreds more are still family keepsakes unknown to seed catalogs, or in the Seed Savers Exchange collection, or in our government genebank, waiting to be discovered by seed savers or purveyors to get out to growers like you to nurture and maintain and to enrich our culture. As we find and adopt these varieties, we must also find and nurture the network of seed growers to grow them, because the big multinational wholesalers are not interested, and we still have a long way to go before we have a real infrastructure of organic seed wholesalers. After twenty or more years a-building, our grower network is more than 50 strong, producing 150-200 varieties annually for our catalog.

Together we can expand our horizons beyond the usual crops in seed catalogs. What about wheat—the world's most important food crop? Have you ever considered growing wheat in your backyard or introducing it into your vegetable crop rotations? Oh no, it is uneconomic. Takes up too much land to grow too little. Very difficult to thresh. Believed these myths and never considered grains? In fact, you CAN grow wheat in your backyard, enough to bake a loaf of homemade bread every week of the year on a patch no bigger than 30x25 feet. My partner Eli Rogosa and I have been trialing heritage wheat varieties in Maine and Massachusetts in a Northeast-SARE funded project, looking for those with high yields and good baking quality. In our first year we found at least 18 that performed comparably or even better than some modern varieties. Armed with many bundles of sheaves from her bountiful harvest at our University of Massachusetts test site, Eli ingeniously invented a simple home threshing system that can process many pounds of grains. She snipped off the heads, inverted a car mat pointy side up in a low-sided basket, agitated the contents to break up the chaff, and then used a hair dryer to blow the light chaff from the heavier seeds. The end product, while not quite seed company quality, is quite clean and very usable.

Heirlooms are important for their own sake, but also provide breeding material to make crosses to create potentially better varieties. Open-pollinated varieties that are not completely stable also have important virtues. Some heirloom bean varieties, for example, are not uniform but show some variation. Frank Morton in Oregon has bred diverse gene-pools, particularly in lettuce, leafy greens and



Seed Savers Exchange

Seed Savers Exchange Yearbook offers 13,571 unique heirloom varieties (20,407 total listings) to its members. More info at www.seedsavers.org.

brassicas. The strength of these cultivars is their adaptability to environmental and climatic change because of their increased genetic diversity. Their different traits will manifest in different conditions, increasing their versatility. Gene-pools also allow growers to con-

“The future of our food supply requires genetic diversity but also demands a diversity of decision makers.”

—William F. Tracy, University of Wisconsin

tinue to select for the traits that they most value. At the frontier of biodiversity is Relentless, an amateur breeder in Garland. In a recent *Acres USA* article he advocated going primitive: to breed tougher plants to better withstand the rigors of unpredictable weather and climate change. Instead of breeding relatively stable varieties, look for varieties that will thrive in an unstable world. Among the tactics he advocated is crossing modern varieties with their ancient precursors such as hybrid carrots with Queen Anne's Lace, or backcrossing wild tomatoes with heirlooms to bring in more wild genes. He even hypothesized that our health is affected because our bodies' genetics have not kept pace with the our domesticated, hybridized plant varieties or with the toxic chemicals we ingest.

Consider genetic engineering as a solution to world hunger. My biggest reason for opposing genetically engineered crops is not that they are unsafe, though unsafe they may be, it is because they force structural changes on the marketplace that are not socially good. The scale of investments required for entry into transgenics has forced corporate consolidations that have turned the seed industry into an oligopoly. Today the four biggest corporations control more than half the world's proprietary seed market, and 43 per cent of the commercial market, an unprecedented concentration. In genetically engineered crops, this concentration goes beyond oligopoly to monopoly. Though there are other players in the GE game, Monsanto dominates. At least one of Monsanto's genetically engineered traits is planted in more than 80 per cent of American corn acres and more than 90% of soy-

bean acres, and its market share in these two crops exceeded 60% in 2008. And when it acquired Seminis in 2005, it became the world's largest vegetable seed company as well, with a 21% global market share, greater in key crops such as tomatoes, peppers and squash. While it was chosen Company of the Year by *Forbes Magazine*, Monsanto was ranked as the world's least ethical company out of 581 by Geneva, Switzerland-based NGO Covalence. Today, when corn and soy farmers go to the seed marketplace seeking the best genetics, they must pay dearly for the stacked GE traits—seed corn prices increased 32% between 2008 and 2009 alone, and soy seed prices 24%. Since 2001, corn seed prices have increased 135% compared to a 20% advance in the Consumer Price Index. Should farmers decide to resist and seek conventional seed, or single trait GMO seed, they find few options in the marketplace. How can GE varieties possibly be a solution for world hunger, when, as the world's most expensive seeds, they are offered to those who can least afford them?

Biodiversity cannot thrive in an atmosphere of concentrated corporate control because the corporations always simplify to the few varieties with the broadest adaptation that can generate the maximum sales all across the world and they concentrate their research on a small number of major crops that can make them the most money. Why is a genetically engineered rutabaga or cardoon unlikely? Follow the money! To quote eminent University of Wisconsin plant breeder William F. Tracy, “Placing the responsibility for the world's crop germplasm and plant improvement in the hands of a few companies is bad public policy. The primary goal of private corporations is to make profit, and...this goal will be at odds with certain public needs... it is extremely dangerous to have so few people making decisions that will determine the future of a crop. Even well intentioned people make mistakes. The future of our food supply requires genetic diversity but also demands a diversity of decision makers.”

If we start with a faulty or overly simplistic paradigm, we are bound to achieve poor solutions. The faulty paradigm of genetic engineering is the mistaken notion that single genes produce single traits and so we can therefore modify crops gene-by-gene to produce desired results. In fact, due to pleiotropy one gene influences multi-traits and so we can expect unforeseen results from genetic engineering. Moreover, starting with a narrow and inaccurate hypothesis, genetic engineering has limited itself to a narrow range of traits, almost exclusively herbicide resistance (to Roundup) and pesticide incorporation (bt) introduced into a narrow range of crops, primarily the major agronomic crops of corn, soybeans, canola and cotton, with a narrow range of multinational industry players. This is about as concentrated and non bio-diverse as you can get.

Part II of this article will appear this summer in Saving Seeds #10, a special edition available at selected Maine farmers' markets beginning in June. ❁

NEWS & NOTES CONTINUED

Since the release of the first Greenpeace Truefood Guide in 2003, more than half of Australia's top food brands have committed to non-GE policies, with Foster's, Nestlé, Schweppes and Lindt now implementing non-GE ingredients policies for their Australian brands.

Scott Delzoppo, Sustainability Manager of Foster's group, said the GE-food debate was a complex issue but they were keen to avoid genetically-modified ingredients.

“Foster's is pleased to clarify that the ingredients used to produce our Australian beer and wine portfolio are non-GE,” he said. “We recognise this area is highly complex and of concern to our consumers and we will continue to work with our suppliers to maintain the highest quality standards and ingredient integrity.”

Greenpeace said it was consumer pressure and lobbying that has so far kept iconic Australian brands like Milo, Uncle Toby's cereal, VB and Peters Ice Cream free from GE-ingredients.

SCIENTIST JEOPARDIZES CAREER BY PUBLISHING PAPER CRITICIZING GM FOODS

“The Genetic Engineering of Food and the Failure of Science” by agro-ecologist Don Lotter, makes a damning case against genetically modified foods, saying the technology is based on obsolete science, that biotechnology companies such as Monsanto have too much influence on government regulators and “public” universities, and that university scientists are ignoring the health and environmental risks of GM crops. Lotter calls the introduction of GM foods the “largest diet experiment in history.”

Lotter has a Ph.D. in agro-ecology from the University of California, Davis, and a master of professional studies in international agricultural and rural development from Cornell University. He has taught environmental science, soil science, plant science, entomology, and vegetable crop production for Santa Monica College, Imperial Valley College, and UC-Davis.

When asked if publishing the paper would jeopardize his prospects for tenure, Lotter replied “I'm proud of the paper. This topic should be taught at universities. There is an enormous gap in public knowledge about this issue.”

More info at <http://www.foodfirst.org/en/node/2513>

FMF DIRECTOR ELECTED TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL FAMILY FARM COALITION

Bob St.Peter, director of Food for Maine's Future, was recently elected to the Executive Committee of the National Family Farm Coalition. The appointment

continued on page 12

FRONT-LINES: Dispatches from the International Movement for Food Sovereignty

Democratic Choice

Biotech technicians neither have the knowledge of gene ecology nor the expertise in multiple disciplines

by Vananda Shiva

After the minister of environment Jairam Ramesh announced a moratorium on Bt brinjal, article after article in the media has denounced the decision, saying such decisions should be left to 'scientists.' The issue is however not science vs anti-science. It is reductionist science vs systems science. The moratorium took into account the best of science.

“Genetic engineering is ‘high tech’ like the earth-mover, but it is also crude tech for the sensitive task of maintaining the ecological fabric of agriculture”

—Vandana Shiva

Many scientists have called for caution and for full and independent assessment. Dr Pushpa Bhargava, the leading scientist who established genetic engineering in India, has been the most vocal voice against Bt brinjal. The so called 'scientists' speaking most vociferously for Bt brinjal are in fact 'technicians' who are using an outmoded reductionist science to develop GM crops for corporations like Monsanto/Mahyco.

Leaving biosafety decisions in their hands is unethical and risky for society. It is unethical because developers and promoters of a technology cannot decide if it is good for society or not. This is an example of conflict of interest. It is risky because they lack the scientific expertise needed for biosafety assessment.

They are like makers of refrigerators who have no idea that the chlorofluorocarbons they use can make a hole in the ozone layer. They are like makers of cars who have no idea that the emissions of their cars pollute the atmosphere and destabilise the climate. Production expertise is not the same as impact expertise.

Genetic engineering is based on reductionist biology, the idea that living systems are machines, and you can change parts of the machine without impacting the organism. Reductionism was chosen as the preferred paradigm for economic and political control of the diversity in nature and society.

Genetic determinism and genetic reductionism go hand in hand. But to say that genes are primary is more ideology than science. Genes are not independent entities, but dependent parts of an entirety that gives them effect. All parts of the cell interact, and the combinations of genes are at least as important as their individual effects in the making of an organism.

More broadly, an organism cannot be treated simply as the product of a number of proteins, each produced by the corresponding gene. Genes have multiple effects, and most traits

“A 'No' uttered from the deepest conviction...”
—Gandhi



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depend on multiple genes.

Genetic engineering moves genes across species by using 'vectors' — usually a mosaic recombination of natural genetic parasites from different sources, including viruses causing cancers and other diseases in animals and plants that are tagged with one or more antibiotic resistant 'marker' genes. Evidence accumulating over the past few years confirms the fear that these vectors constitute major sources of genetic pollution with drastic ecological and public health consequences.

Risk assessment

Biotech technicians do not have either the scientific expertise of gene ecology or the expertise in the multiple disciplines that are needed for the risk assessment of GMOs in the context of their impact on the environment and public health.

Real scientists know that mechanistic science of genetic reductionism is inaccurate and flawed. Deeper research has led to the emergent field of epigenetics. Epigenetic mechanisms can edit the read out of a gene so as to create over 30,000 different variations of proteins for the same gene blueprint. Epigenetic describes how gene activity and cellular expression are regulated by information from the environment, not by the internal matter of DNA.

The limitation at a higher systems level is even more serious. Bt brinjal is being offered as a pest control solution. A gene for producing a toxin is being put into the plant, along with antibiotic resistance markers and viral promoters. This is like using an earth-mover to make a hole in the wall of your house for hanging up a painting. Like the earth-mover will destroy the wall, the

transgenic transformation will disrupt the metabolism and self regulatory processes of the organism.

Genetic engineering is 'high tech' like the earth-mover, but it is also crude tech for the sensitive task of maintaining the ecological fabric of agriculture to control pests. Pests are controlled through biodiversity, through organic practices which build resilience to pests and disease. In Andhra Pradesh, a government project for non-pesticide management has covered 14 lakh acres.

The scientific alternative to the crude tech of putting toxic genes into our food is agro ecology. The International Assessment on Agricultural Science and Technology Development has recognised from a global survey of peer reviewed studies that agro ecology based systems outperform farming systems using genetic engineering. Epigenetics and agro ecology are the sciences for the future. Reductionist biology is a primitive science of the past.

Our decisions about food and agriculture need to be based on the best of science, not the worst of science. They definitely should not be based on a crude technology parading as science. Because we are what we eat, and food enters our bodies, citizens must have a choice about what they eat. The democratisation of science and decision making has become an imperative. All human beings are knowing subjects and in a democracy people's choices must count.

That is why the public hearings on Bt brinjal were a democratic imperative. Those who say our food choices must be left to biotech technicians are working against both science and democracy. ❀

Peasant Agriculture Can Cool the Planet

Opening remarks by
La Via Campesina
international coordinator
Henry Saragih at Klimaforum 2009.

(Ed. Note: Klimaforum, 'The People's Climate Conference', was an alternative climate change forum held in Copenhagen opposite the UN's Summit on Climate Change. 50,000 people from around the world attended Klimaforum 2009.)

Why We Left Our Farms to Come to Copenhagen

Tonight is a very special night for us to get together here for the opening of the assembly of the social movements and civil society at the Klimaforum. We, the international peasant movement La Via Campesina, are coming to Copenhagen from all five corners of the world, leaving our farmland, our animals, our forest, and also our families in the hamlets and villages to join you all.

Why is it so important for us to come this far? There are a number of reasons for that. Firstly, we would like to tell you that climate change is already seriously impacting us. It brings floods, droughts and the outbreak of pests that are all causing harvest failures. I must point out that these harvest failures are something that the farmers did not create. Instead,

“How do we solve the climate chaos, hunger and assure a better livelihood for farmers, when the agricultural sector itself is contributing more than half of the total emissions?”

—Henry Saragih

it is the polluters who caused the emissions who destroy the natural cycles. So, we small scale farmers came here to say that we will not pay for their mistakes. And we are asking the emitters to face up to their responsibilities.

Secondly, I would like to share with you some facts about who the emitters of green house gases in agriculture really are: new data that has come out clearly shows that industrial agriculture and the globalized food system are responsible of between 44 and 57% of total global greenhouse gas emissions. This figure can be broken down as follows (i) Agricultural activities are responsible for 11 to 15%, (ii) Land clearing and deforestation cause an additional 15 to 18%, (iii) Food processing, packing and transportation cause 15 to 20%, and (iv) Decomposition of organic waste causes another 3 to 4%. It means that our current food system is a major polluter.



Via Campesina General Coordinator Henry Saragih opens Klimaforum 2009

“We small scale farmers came here to say that we will not pay for their mistakes.”

—Henry Saragih

If we genuinely want to tackle the climate change crisis, the only

way we have to go forward is to stop industrial agriculture. Agribusiness has not only highly contributed to the climate crisis, it has also massacred the small farmers of the world. Millions of farmers, men and women from around the world, have been kicked off their land. Millions of others suffer violence every year because of land conflicts in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Small farmers and landless farmers make up the majority of the more than 1 billion hungry people in the world. And because of free trade, many small farmers commit suicide in South Asia. So putting an end to industrial agriculture is the only way we can go.

Will the current climate negotiations, that are relying on carbon trade mechanisms, bring solutions to climate change? To this we say that carbon trade mechanisms will only serve polluting countries and companies, and bring disaster to small farmers and indigenous peoples in developing countries. The REDD initiative (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and

The question we have to answer now is: how do we solve the climate chaos, hunger and assure a better livelihood for farmers, when the agricultural sector itself is contributing more than half of the total emissions? We believe that it is the industrial and agribusiness model of agriculture that is at the root of the problem, because those percentages that I mentioned earlier come from the deforestation and the conversion of natural forests into monoculture plantations, all of which is being carried out by Agribusiness Corporations. Not by family farmers. Such large emissions of methane by agriculture are also due to the use of urea as a petrochemical fertilizer through the green revolution, very much supported by the World Bank. At the same time, agricultural trade liberalization promoted by free trade agreements (FTA) and by the World Trade Organization (WTO) is contributing to the greenhouse gases emissions due to food processing and food transportation around the world.



Degradation) has already kicked off their land many indigenous peoples and small farmers in developing countries. And more and more agricultural land is being converted into tree plantations in order to attract carbon credits.

At COP 13 in Bali 2007, La Via Campesina proposed the landless farmers' and small farmers' solution to climate change, which is: "small scale sustainable farmers are cooling down the earth". And here, at COP 15, again we bring that proposal, backing it with the figures that prove that it could reduce more than half of the global greenhouse gas emissions. This figure comes from: (i) Recuperating organic matter in the soil would reduce emissions by 20 to 35%. (ii) Reversing the concentration of meat production in factory farms and reintegrating joint animal and crop production would reduce them by 5 to 9% (iii) Putting local markets and fresh food back at the center of the food system would reduce a further 10 to 12%. (iv) Halting land clearing and deforestation would stop 15 to 18% of emissions. In short, by taking agriculture away from the big agribusiness corporations and putting it back into the hands of small farmers, we can reduce half of the

global emissions of greenhouse gases. This is what we propose, and we call it Food Sovereignty.

And to achieve that we need social movements to work together and struggle together to put an end to the current false solutions that are today on the table at the climate negotiations. This is a must, otherwise we will face an even bigger tragedy worldwide. We, as social movements, have to bring our own agenda onto the table, because we are the first climate victims and climate refugees and therefore climate justice is in our hands.

At the FAO Food Summit in 1996, governments committed themselves to reduce hunger by half by 2015. The reality is that the number of hungry people has recently increased dramatically. We do not want the same thing to happen with the climate talks and see the emissions increase even further regardless of what the governments negotiate within the UNFCCC.

We invite all the movements present in Copenhagen to join together to bring climate justice to the table. Climate justice will only be achieved through solidarity and social justice.

Henry Saragih, General Coordinator, La Via Campesina

Copenhagen, 7th December 2009

Via Campesina North America Calls First Public Hearing to Prepare the Presentation of the GM Maize Case Before International Courts

Inauguration of "Transgenic contamination of maize: crime against humanity?"

(Guadalajara, Mar 2, 2010)

Faced with the international "technical" conference of the FAO in Guadalajara, "Agricultural Biotechnologies in Developing Countries," which is little more than the promotion of GM crops – today we inaugurated the "First public hearing to prepare the presentation of the GM Maize case before international courts," organized by La Via Campesina North America Region, Red en Defensa del Maíz (Network in Defense of Maize, Mexico), and Asamblea Nacional de Afectados Ambientales (Assembly of People Displaced by Environmental Impacts, Mexico), with the participation of 276 people, mostly members and leaders of peasant, family farm, and indigenous peoples' organizations from 19 Mexican states, the USA, and Canada.

The hearing was inaugurated by Alberto Gómez Flores of La Via Campesina, Eutimio Díaz of the Wixarika People (in the name of the Network for the Defense of Maize), and Octavio Rosas of the Asamblea Nacional de Afectados Ambientales. Alberto Gómez said that the peasant and indigenous people of Mexico feel it is an act of aggression for the FAO to come here to promote GMOs, called the GM contamination of maize "a crime against humanity." He was followed by Pat Mooney of the ETC Group (Canada), who denounced that "GMO contaminated and transnation-



Peasants from around North America gather to oppose transgenics and Monsanto in Mexico.

al corporations (TNCs) have now contaminated the FAO and the UN, which is another crime against humanity." He noted that "what is a crisis for people – hunger – is cynically seen by TNCs as an opportunity, to push new products, like GM crops."

“A Mixtec man and women from Oaxaca told how their native maize varieties had been contaminated with as many three different transgenes.”

Camila Montecinos of GRAIN in Chile sent her regrets that the terrible recent earthquake in her country made it impossible for her to travel. But in

her document, which was read to the audience, she stated that "GMO contamination is an intentional strategy by TNCs to open new markets for their seeds," using the argument that once local crops are already contaminated, there is no longer any reason to maintain bans on legal GMO plantings. George Naylor, ex-president of the National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC) in the USA, told an anecdote from his neighbors, who found that their cows refuse to eat GM maize, and he argued that this exposes the lie by industry when they claim there are no negative health effects of GMOs.

Ernesto Ladrón de Guevara of UNORCA, reviewed the history of neoliberal laws in Mexico, on seeds, biosafety, etc., and noted that they have given "poor or negative results." Similarly, attorney Evangelina Robles of the Coas Collective, explain how, with the signing of NAFTA, a process of modi-

fying nationals was initiated in Mexico, with the objective of "disarticulating and privatizing of the elements of the territories of indigenous and peasant peoples; the land, air, forests, water, biodiversity, etc.," paving the way for GMOs, among other evil things.

The afternoon saw testimonies and indigenous, peasant and family farmers. A Mixtec man and women from Oaxaca told how their native maize varieties had been contaminated with as many three different transgenes, but also that they have been developing local techniques for decontamination, such as pulling up deformed plants, or cutting off their tassels. Eutimio Díaz, of the Wixarika people in Jalisco, described how, "for indigenous people, maize is first, maize is ours, and we are part of her." He noted that his communities have made a firm decision to defend their maize, and therefore, "we will not accept any seeds from the government, because we don't know what they are, or for what real purpose they are giving them to us." Sergio Bautista, of the Nahua people in the Huasteca region of Hidalgo, agreed, stating that, "we will not plant any seed from

NEWS & NOTES CONTINUED

took place at the National Family Farm Coalition's winter meeting in Washington, DC at the end of January. The term is one year.

"It's an honor and privilege to work alongside these true heroes," says St. Peter. "Working with NFFC I am constantly reminded of how important and valuable the contributions of family farmers and fisherman are to rural communities everywhere."

The National Family Farm Coalition is based in Washington DC and is comprised of 25 farm and fishing groups from 32 states, including Food for Maine's Future. NFFC serves as a national link for grassroots organizations working on family farm issues credit, trade, and farm and food policy. Through NFFC, these organizations collaborate regionally on nation-wide campaigns making the most of every group's experience, resources, and impact. For more information visit www.nffc.net.

FEDERAL JUDGE DENIES TEMPORARY BAN ON MONSANTO SUGAR BEETS

By Jeffrey Tomich

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

(Mar 17, 2010) Farmers can continue to grow Monsanto Co.'s genetically modified sugar beets, at least this year, after a federal judge in San Francisco refused to grant a ban proposed by environmental and food safety groups.

U.S. District Judge Jeffrey White said in Tuesday's order that the damage from an injunction against planting and processing biotech sugar beets this spring would be "dramatic and widespread." But he didn't rule out ordering a permanent ban later this year.

Tuesday's order followed warnings from agriculture economists, farmers and the sugar beet industry, all of which predicted dire consequences if a ban was imposed.

Genetically modified sugar beets account for almost half of the nation's sugar supply, and prohibiting their use on such short notice may have led processing plants to shut down and caused a huge spike in prices for sugar and sweetened foods, the groups said.

Roundup Ready sugar beets, developed by Creve Coeur-based Monsanto, are genetically altered to withstand applications of glyphosate-based weed killers.

INDIAN MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT HEEDS PUBLIC CALL FOR A MORATORIUM ON BT BRINJAL

(Feb. 10, 2010) After nearly a month of public hearings, protests, and nationwide debate, India's Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh announced today an indefinite moratorium on the sale of Bt Brinjal (genetically modified eggplant). Cleared for commercialisation in October by India's Genetic Engineering

continued on page 13

Maine Family Farms & Supporters Call for Scale-Appropriate Regulations to Protect Traditional Farming

(Ed. note: The following is a letter sent to customers of Quill's End Farm in Penobscot, Maine regarding the rule making process for Maine's 1,000 bird poultry processing exemption.)

If you think you are too little to make a difference, try getting in bed with a mosquito.

Dear Friends,

I know it's early for a black fly or a mosquito reference, but the further we get into this legislative/bureaucracy maze about chicken rules, the more little we feel. So, while our one niggling buzz can certainly be effective, I am hoping you'll swarm with us again and real change will happen that will enable us to raise and sell chicken legally to you.

Many of you are aware that there was a great law enacted last June for small farmers and their consumers. It is called the 1,000 bird poultry exemption. Farmers can sell their poultry at farmers' markets, directly from their farms or through Community Support Agriculture (CSA) shares, but not to supermarkets, restaurants, or any other institutions.

However, the Quality Assurance and Regulation division of the Maine Department of Agriculture has now written provisional regulations to govern the exemption. These rules must be reviewed by the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. The Committee then will make a recommendation to the full legislature for a vote. [Ed. note: The ACF Committee voted 7-2 on March 5 to recommend accepting QAR's rules.] We believe the 1,000 bird poultry exemption law is both necessary and sufficient without the QAR's "Provisional Regulations". It is necessary to protect small scale farming and consumer choice. It is also entirely sufficient to address food safety through labeling requirements and direct farmer accountability. Rep. McCabe of Skowhegan, who introduced the bill, has assured us that it was the intent of the law to exempt small farmers, not to create another structure of harmful regulations.

Our objections to the "provisional rules" are threefold. USDA governance should NOT extend to our local agriculture. The rules are unnecessary and ineffective to address food safety concerns. Finally, the rules make raising poultry on a small scale financially unfeasible for farmers.

At a public hearing in December, the QAR heard much opposition to the rules and did make some changes. We commend them for listening to the comments and letters of so many around the state. However, the substance of the rules remains unchanged: **each farm, whether it sells 1 bird or 1,000, must build its own processing facility.** In all our correspondence with the QAR, its officials have said little about addressing food safety concerns. Rather they have emphasized to us the amount of pressure they are under from the USDA to draft rules "equal to" the USDA rules. The USDA should not be determining farming policies for products which are sold only in the state of Maine!

At the December hearing, I had a con-

versation with the Director of the Division of Infectious Disease at the Maine Center for Disease Control. He mentioned two factors which are very relevant to the debate about the poultry exemption rules. Of the 150 cases in Maine last year of salmonella or campylobacter contamination, none has been traced to any small poultry producer. He also stated that Maine



Life is good on the farm.

does NOT have food borne illness outbreaks unless they enter from out of state—only sporadic incidences. There is an absence of any evidence to suggest that regulation is necessary for small-scale poultry producers.

If we are required to build our own facility, we would need to incur a debt for which the 1,000 birds we raise a year could not pay. There are some of us determined to farm because it makes sense for our family life, for land stewardship, and for a clean food supply. Most of us don't come to it with great financial resources, just firm convictions and some dedication. We

are rebuilding barns, reclaiming pastures, and restoring fertility to acidic soils (Chickens are a great way to do this). It is an incremental and expensive process. Meanwhile, you are encouraging us to do more. If we raise beef, could we also raise chicken? If we raise chicken, how about turkey? Ducks? We would like to say yes. Healthy soils are the foundation of our farming practices, but you are the ones who inspire us to keep building for the future. The QAR's rules don't allow growth without further indebtedness, which is a sure recipe for failure in farming.

Farmers have traditionally shared equipment. On our peninsula, there used to be a branch of Heifer Project International (HPI). HPI as a group owned one chicken plucker. It was sometimes hard to get it back from one member, but it was available to individuals in the group who needed to process their chickens. The small farms which produce less than 1,000 birds a year generally raise these birds seasonally. That means the equipment the QAR rules require each farm to own would likely be used for a maximum of 12-16 days a year. It still makes better sense for us to share equipment costs. Sharing and bartering play a vital role in our rural communities. Rules which outlaw sharing and bartering make fundamental changes in our communities which serve to isolate and indebted us.

Blessings,

Heather Retberg for Quill's End Farm
Penobscot, Maine ❧



An offering made for mystica, a cultural celebration.

VIA CAMPESINA NORTH AMERICA continued from page 11

SAGARPA (the Ministry of Agriculture)." He also said that "maize is very sacred to us, it is our life."

Ineke Booy, of the National Farmers Union of Canada (NFU), explained how, when they converted their farm to organic, "we thought we had defeated the pesticide TNCs, but know we find we are once more under attack, this time by GMOs." Jan Slomp, from the same organization, told the story of new laws in Canada that prohibit the sale or planting of seed varieties not on an official approved list, and how corrupted officials remove non-GMO varieties from that list. In the case of canola, he said that "the farmer is left with just two options: go GMO, or stop planting canola." Amalia Salas, of Xochimilco in Mexico City, said that "the Mother Earth is very very angry with us, because we are not taking care of her." And that, "unless we defend our maize from GMOs, our ancestors will also be angry with us." Olegario Carillo, of

UNORCA, denounced the "coordination action by TNCs and a government that has sold out," that has brought us to the lamentable present situation of GMO contamination in Mexico. He reaffirmed the commitment of UNORCA to the struggle to defend maize.

We reject the promotion of GMOs by the FAO.

No to GM maize! Monsanto Out!
Food Sovereignty Now!

La Via Campesina North America Region

Red en Defensa del Maíz (Network in Defense of Maize, Mexico)

Asamblea Nacional de Afectados Ambientales (Assembly of People Displaced by Environmental Impacts, Mexico)

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www.viacampesina.org ❧

Facing Our Global Water Crisis

"We forget that the water cycle and the life cycle are one."

—Jacques Cousteau

Many of us were taught in grade school that the earth is abundantly rich in water, and that the water cycle is a rapidly renewable resource, constantly replenishing itself. We do after all live on the Blue Planet where three-quarters of earth's surface is covered by water. Of all the earth's water, only 0.1 percent is available for human use and 70 percent of that water is used primarily by industrial agriculture to produce food.

Human behavior during the past 150 years has threatened the assumptions we were taught while young. More than a century of damming, polluting, depleting, diverting, overconsuming, and privatizing much of the world's fresh water resources has disrupted and restricted hydrological systems worldwide, leading our global society toward an ecological crisis equivalent to that of rapid climate change. We are starting to realize that the world's freshwater supplies are not as abundant or renewable as we once assumed. Today communities

"Of all the earth's water, only 0.1 percent is available for human use and 70 percent of that water is used primarily by industrial agriculture to produce food."

—Emily Posner

throughout the world face a global water crisis and its political, economic, and ecologic consequences.

While the impacts of this crisis vary and are localized, issues that arise tend to fall into the following three aspects of global water scarcity:

- First, the world is running out of freshwater because human society pollutes, diverts, and depletes the planet's fresh water—a finite resource.

- Second, as the ecological crisis deepens, so too does the human crisis as more people are denied the right to safe drinking water. Today, 1.1 billion people on the planet do not have



access to clean water, and 2.6 billion do not have access to basic sanitation services causing thousands of children to die daily from preventable waterborne diseases.

- Third, as outlined in Maude Barlow's recent book *Blue Covenant*:

a powerful corporate water cartel has emerged to seize control of every aspect of water for its own profit. Corporations deliver drinking water and take away wastewater; corporations put massive amounts of water in plastic bottles and sell it to us at exorbitant prices. . . corporations extract and move water by huge pipelines from watersheds and aquifers to sell to big cities and industries (i.e., agriculture); corporations buy, store and trade water on the open market, like running shoes.

The cumulative impact of these three scenarios is now beginning to be felt in the United States—and in Maine. For example, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, 36 states will face shortfalls if current water use remains unchecked as agribusiness, mining, and industry suck up and pollute water supplies and subdivisions and farms proliferate in the desert.

Maine's groundwater is governed by an antiquated legal framework that cannot provide long-term health of the state's aquifer and groundwater resources. In fact, Maine is one of just two states that still follow "rule-of-capture" policy, where groundwater is the absolute property of the owner of the land from which it is extracted. Rule-of-capture policy emerged from Eng-

lish common law during American colonization when groundwater and surface water systems were thought to be separate and independent of one another. As geology and hydrology have advanced and begun to recognize the interconnected nature of groundwater and surface water, most state courts have overturned rule-of-capture statutes; whereas, Maine state law continues to permit rule-of-capture as the basis of state water policy. Such inadequate protection combined with the deepening world water crisis and economic globalization leave Maine's water and its rural communities incredibly vulnerable to outside forces who seek to "commodify" our clean water supplies.

This precedent is problematic once we recognize, as the Cousteau quote at the beginning of this article notes, that the life cycles of human and natural communities are intricately dependent upon the water cycle. Maine's forest, marsh, and coastal ecologies—as well as those whose livelihoods rely upon a healthy environment—depend on the state's hydrologic health. Furthermore, these undeveloped regions act as a carbon sink (unprecedented in size to any other area this side of the Mississippi River) that sequesters climate-changing carbon. Maine's water and forests provide invaluable security in these climatically unstable times.

The vibrancy of intact and healthy ecologic and hydrologic systems needs to be valued in new ways. If water is essential for life, then the life and rights of the ecosystems that safeguard our water supplies must be recognized and defended by both landholders and government. ✨

CORN SEED COLLABORATIVE

Interested in preserving genetic diversity and traditional corn varieties in Maine?

Food for Maine's Future is looking for experienced farmers and gardeners to grow open pollinated varieties of corn for us.

Please contact Bob St.Peter if you are interested or for more information.

bob@foodformainesfuture.org or 244-0908

NEWS & NOTES CONTINUED

Approval Committee (GEAC), Bt Brinjal has been met with tremendous resistance by farmers, consumer advocacy groups, medical experts, and environmentalists. A number of state governments, which in India's federal system have the final say on agriculture, have also expressed apprehension about the product. Ten states—West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar (which together produce 60 percent of the country's eggplant), Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Uttarakhand—have already declared bans on genetically modified crops.

In his statement, Ramesh cited the wide array of disapproving viewpoints presented during public hearings. "When there is no clear consensus within the scientific community itself, when there is so much opposition from the state governments, when responsible civil society organizations and eminent scientists have raised many serious questions that have not been answered satisfactorily, when the public sentiment is negative... and when there is no overriding urgency to introduce it here, it is my duty to adopt a cautious, precautionary principle-based approach and impose a moratorium on the release of Bt-brinjal..."

STUDY LOOKS AT FOOD COST PERCEPTIONS AND PURCHASING AMONG UNINSURED, LOW-INCOME, RURAL ADULTS

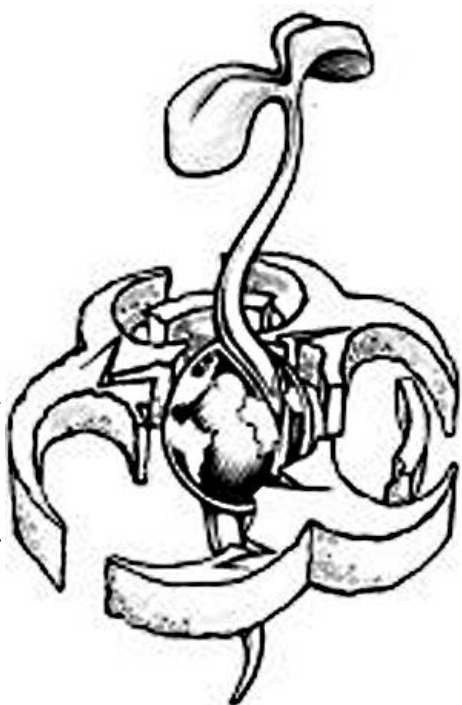
New study finds healthful diets are commonly perceived as more costly, but food cost perceptions and purchasing practices of uninsured, low-income, rural adults have not been reported. Over three quarters of respondents perceived that healthy foods cost more; however, 97% of those indicated that they would be willing to purchase healthy foods if they cost less. Common food purchasing practices: looking for grocery specials, buying foods on sale, buying generic brands, using a grocery list, and limiting trips to restaurants. Common money-saving strategies: using strategies when eating away from home, using food assistance programs, and using fruits and vegetables when making food at home.

The full study by Sharon L. Peterson, Katie M. Dodd, Kyungmi Kim, and Sara Long Roth can be found in *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, Volume 5, Issue 1.

VILSACK AND HOLDER ANNOUNCE "PIGFORD II" SETTLEMENT WITH BLACK FARMERS

(Feb 18, 2010) – Agriculture Secretary Vilsack and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced the successful resolution of the longstanding litigation known as Pigford II. Ralph Paige,

continued on page 14



RESISTANCE IS FERTILE

NEWS & NOTES CONTINUED

Executive Director of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, said in response to the announcement; "We are pleased with the \$1.25 billion settlement. It opens a new chapter in the relationship between USDA and black farmers, and shows Secretary Vilsack's and the Obama Administration's commitment to moving into a new era. Now we look forward to actually getting this money into farmers' hands. This will take some time, however, as Congress needs to appropriate the money, the court needs to approve the settlement, and class members actually need to submit their claims and have them adjudicated. The Federation of Southern Cooperatives and other farm groups look forward to working with the Obama administration, the Justice Department and Congress to assure an expeditious process in finally assisting these thousands of black farmers who have been treated unjustly."

For more information about the Pigford discrimination lawsuit and history visit www.federationsoutherncoop.com.

AMISH MAN WINS LIVESTOCK REGISTRATION CASE

Bruce Vielmetti
JOURNAL SENTINEL

(Mar 9, 2010) An Amish farmer in Clark County, [WI], has won his fight against the state's livestock registration law, which he argued violates his religious beliefs.

The case against Emanuel Miller Jr. of Loyal was the first in the state against an Amish farmer over refusal to obey the 2005 mandatory livestock registration law, aimed at controlling outbreaks of disease. It requires owners of premises where livestock is kept to register the location, number and type of livestock with the state.

Paul McGraw, the assistant state veterinarian, said he expects the state to appeal the Miller decision.

Amish and other farmers around the nation have been following Miller's case because of a fear that the law is the first step to the individual tagging of all livestock, a program once advanced by the federal government. Some Amish and others say such a numbering system would amount to the "mark of the beast," which is referenced in the Book of Revelation as being related to Satan. Clark County Circuit Judge Jon Counsell ruled that the state failed to show how mandatory registration furthers animal health and food safety any more effectively than alternatives that would not affect Miller's religious freedom.

Counsell presided at the trial in September, when Amish packed the courtroom, said District Attorney Darwin Zwieg.

continued on page 18

Ask CR . . .



Do It

Dear CR,

I grew my corn seed for three years in a row. The first year was good, the second year a little better, but the third year (2008) there was a noticeable drop-off in the size of plants and ears. I grew about 100 plants a year in very fertile garden soil. Should I start over?

Had your sub-par season been 2009, I would have considered two possible explanations. The 2009 season was so cold and wet for so long that many plants suffered stunted growth from an inability to take up nutrients and from insufficient sun and heat for optimal photosynthesis. But 2008 was an adequate, if not outstanding growing season, so the likely causation of your decline is inbreeding depression. Inbreeding depression is kind of like those royal families you read about in your history books who intermarried too much among close relatives, leading to a general drop-off in smarts, vigor etc. and the eventual decline of the dynasties.

Corn requires good populations to retain vigor. 100 plants are probably not quite enough. If you can spare the room and have the energy, 250 or even 500 would be much better. In your case, your best bet is to go back to the original seed stock you planted in year 1 and start over with a larger population. If you no longer have these seeds, try to replenish them from the original, or some other reliable source. Failing that, if you still have seeds from your first crop, that is next best, or your second crop, or if some, but an inadequate number from each year, mix them to try for a little more diversity and plant again.

If you have only the seed from last year's poor crop and can't replenish from elsewhere, you may be able to select your way out of your dilemma if you have sufficient seeds. Plant a lot of them (at least several hundred) and then when your crop matures, pick out the better ears from your better plants from which to save your seeds. It is smart to walk the patch often and tag the plants that impress you with their



To ensure genetic diversity in corn plant 250 to 500 or more plants

growth and vigor with surveyor's tape, so you can pick them out easily at harvest time. Again, be sure to choose enough different ears from enough different plants to keep some vigor in your genetics, but at the same time, make a conscious effort to avoid stunted plants and stunted ears, thereby selecting out the deleterious genes that had begun to creep into your seed. Good luck!

Dear CR,

What are some crops that I can grow both for seed and for eating?

With many crops it is possible to double-dip, grow them both for good eating and for seed saving.

We can rule out those crops in which we eat the immature seeds, such as fresh beans, peas and sweet corn. Also excluded would be any crops in which we eat the buds before the flowers mature, such as broccoli and cauliflower. Cucumbers and summer squash won't work either because they are edible only when the fruits are small and immature, before their seeds are ready, and become tough blimps by the time the seed is mature, although we can always reserve a small part of each patch for seeds and not eat from that.

Just about anything else can work. The obvious choices are pumpkins, winter squashes, cantaloupes and watermelons in which we normally discard the seeds from the fruit cavities and consume the meats

(although roasted pumpkin seeds are a yummy treat and watermelon seeds a treasured delicacy in some parts of the world). But you can have your pie and save your seed, too! Tomatoes, especially for sauce and paste, and peppers are clearly possible as well. Squeeze the seed gel out of the tomatoes and cook down the rest. Scrape the seeds from peppers and slice the rest. With fresh eating tomatoes it is a little harder since the liquid with the seeds imparts most of the flavor we treasure. But in a normal year, blight excluded, tomato plants bear enough fruit so that there will be plenty to eat and enough left over from which to save seed.

Lettuce and other greens present another method to get the best of all worlds. Plant closely and then keep thinning for eating purposes. Leave the best

"With many crops it is possible to double-dip, grow them both for good eating and for seed saving."

—CR Lawn



A great device for processing large volumes of squash seed.



Eat the squash and save the seed!

plants to grow for seed. These will get quite large, much more so than the same plants in the edible stage, and rigorous thinning permits them to do so. You can follow the same regimen for beets, eating the thinnings for the greens and baby beets.

Beets, carrots and other root crops take two years to make seed in our climate. They must be harvested in fall and brought inside to be heeled in for winter. At that time, and again in spring, you can select, saving the best roots to go back out in the soil for their biennial year to make seeds and culling the rest for eating purposes. Leave parsnips in the ground all winter, but select similarly to allow the best plants to make seed, while bringing the roots of all others inside to consume.

CR Lawn is founder of FEDCO Seeds and co-founder of Food for Maine's Future. Submit your question for CR at askcr@foodformainesfuture.org.

Yoursell

Recipes from Our 80/20 Kitchen

by Bob St.Peter & Juli Perry

You want some ployes, you?

Buckwheat has a storied history in Northern Maine, coming to prominence in the 1830's when, according to the Bouchard Family website, the St. John Valley's "thriving farming community faced a crisis when wheat midge (an insect) and rust (a disease) ruined wheat crops throughout the Northeast." Local farmers did what they always do – they adapted – substituting oats and buckwheat. By 1850 buckwheat was the grain crop leader in the Valley, representing 40-45% of all grain production.

Buckwheat flour pancakes were "a tradition which Valley farmwives inherited from their French-Canadian and Acadian ancestors," says the website www.ployes.com. Ployes was a local term, and were eaten more like flatbreads are in other peasant cultures – three times a day with meals. "Their



Our younger daughter, Emma, gives her approval.

long on the other side to avoid scorching the chocolate. Serve with butter, maple syrup, or whatever else sounds appropriate.

Here's another recipe for ployes (or 'placos', in this case) adapted from the Bouchard Family website:

Ployes Tacos

Prepare ployes as directed, make them a little bigger 7-8 inches, stack in a plate and set aside.

- 1 lb. Ground beef (or use well-seasoned black beans, recipe below)
- 1 package taco seasoning mix (or mix 2 tsp. chili powder 1 1/2 tsp. paprika 1 1/2 tsp. cumin 1 tsp. onion powder 3/4 tsp. garlic salt 1/2 tsp. salt. Dash cayenne)
- 2 diced tomatoes
- 1 diced onion
- 1 cup shredded lettuce

- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- Sour cream & salsa

Brown ground beef, drain and add taco seasoning mix and a half cup or more of water. Place ployes on plate and add 2 Tbsp. of meat filling lengthwise in middle of ployes. Add cheese, tomato, onions, and lettuce. Roll or fold over and top with sour cream. Or keep the ployes warm under a towel and let people assemble their own. Whether made with beans or meat this is one of our kids favorite meals.

Delicious & Simple Black Beans

- 1 pound black beans (available seasonally from Crown of Maine Organic Cooperative)
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2-5 cloves garlic
- 1-2 dried chipotle (for smokey flavor and a little heat)
- Salt to taste

Check the beans for rocks and debris. Rinse, then add the onion, garlic, chipotle if using, and 10 cups water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer until beans are tender and creamy. Add salt to taste just as the beans start to get soft. Adjust water level as you go to achieve your desired consistency. Remove chipotle(s) entirely or remove them and separate the flesh from the seeds and discard the seeds. The seeds can be quite hot, even for the average fire-eater, and can hurt going through and out. This makes enough beans for a hungry family of four for several meals.

These bean also make excellent refried beans. Simply heat some fat (we like lard or bacon drippings) until hot then add the beans and mash, adding liquid from the pot or water to achieve desired consistency. Season to taste with salt and other spices. ❁

Proposal to Turn Co-op Into Co-producer

Midcoast Permaculture Proposes Garden for Good Tern Co-op

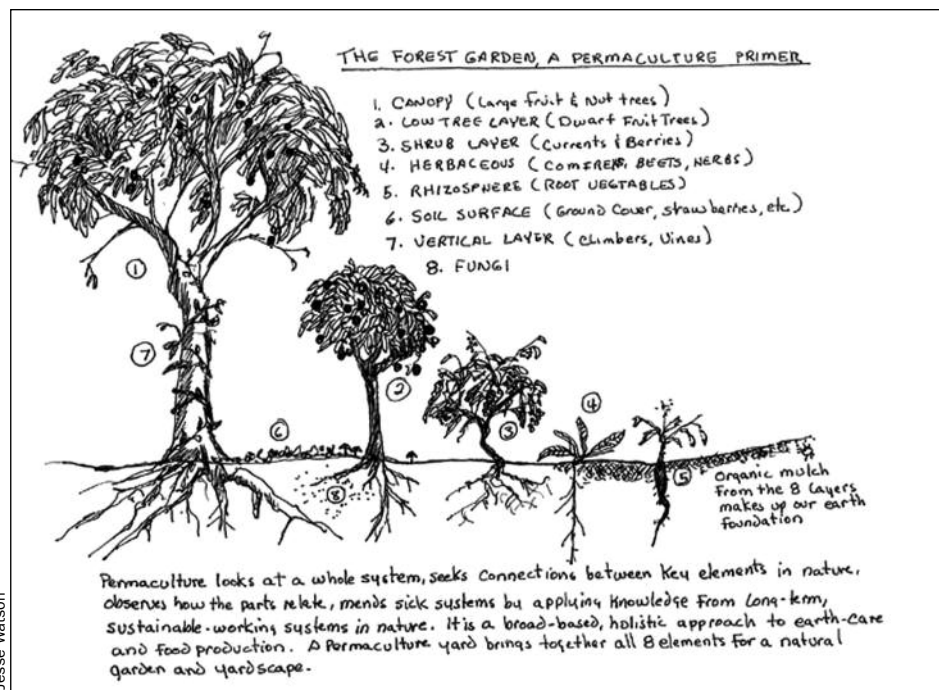
The Proposal

In 2008 the Board of Directors of the Good Tern Co-op in Rockland wrote its 2-year and 10-year visions for the Co-op. These visions include a garden and the installation of photovoltaic panels on the roof in order to "become a model for sustainable living". While the possibility of installing solar panels may still lie in the future, the idea of transforming, indeed ennobling, the Co-op's lawn into a visually-striking, largely self-sustaining edible ecosystem is a project that officially began when Permaculture Designer Jesse Watson and I presented to the Board our proposal to design and install a Permaculture garden on the lawn.

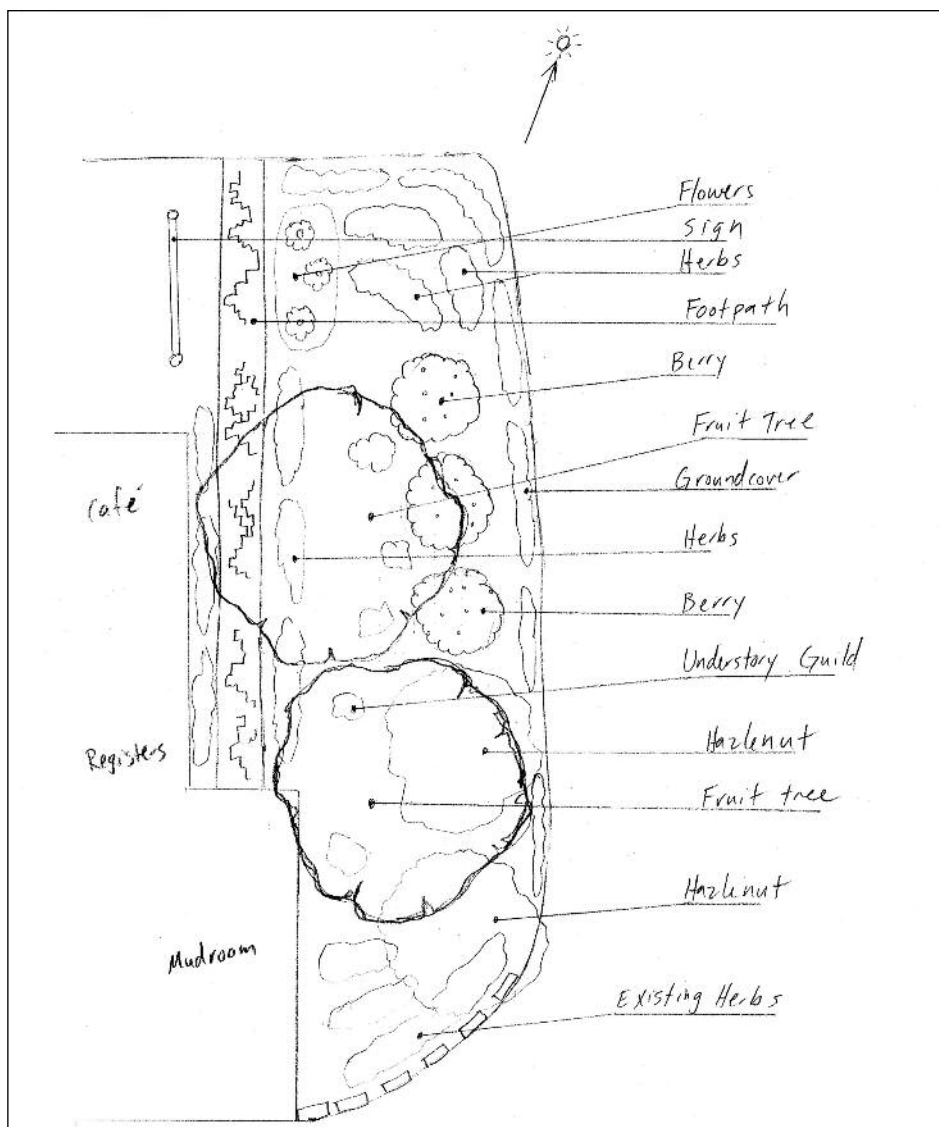
Permaculture

Permaculture, in its most concrete sense, is a breed of landscape design whose explicit goal is the engineering of sustainable human habitats that produce more energy than they consume. It is a contraction of the words Permanent Agriculture. Permaculture is the conscious design and maintenance of cultivated ecosystems which have the diversity, stability and resilience of natural ecosystems. It is the harmonious integration of landscape, people and appropriate technologies, providing food, shelter, energy and other needs in a sustainable way. Permaculture is a

See **PROPOSAL TO TURN CO-OP INTO CO-PRODUCER** on page 19



Multi-story gardening maximizes space and a lot more.



A sketch of the proposed garden at Good Tern Co-op in Rockland.

importance as a regular part of a daily diet," writes the Bouchard Family, "and the many recipe variations which developed over succeeding generations, make ployes a truly distinctive Valley tradition."

Even though we are both from Aroostook County, and Bob's paternal ancestry can be traced to New Brunswick, ployes were not something we truly discovered until about 10 years ago. We could purchase the Bouchard Family's mixes at stores while living in Portland and over the years they have become a staple in our household. We enjoy them with butter, syrup, and yogurt, and as a flatbread for wrapping beans, like tortillas. We've given the later their own name – placos. Morning leftovers are good with peanut butter and home-made preserves for a quick snack, either for a working parent or a cranky child.

One recent Sunday while intending to make a brunch of chocolate chip pancakes, Bob discovered we were out of flour. We did have ploye mix, though. While the basic recipe only calls for adding only water, he added 2 eggs and milk, and a smattering of chocolate chips (with only minor pilfering from his 5 year old helper). They turned really good, once we learned the trick: Get the chips on just before you're ready to flip, then don't leave it too

Jim Cook Memorial Award 2010 Nominees

The Jim Cook Memorial Award was inaugurated in March, 2009 at Food for Maine's Future's Local & Sustainable Food Conference in honor of the life and work of our friend and mentor, Jim Cook. Last year's winner was Crown of Maine Organic Cooperative. The award recognizes individuals, groups, and organizations who are working to build a more just and sustainable food system here in Maine.

Food for Maine's Future received a number of nominations and wishes to congratulate and thank all those listed below for their dedication and example. The winner of the 2010 Jim Cook Memorial Award will be announced at our Mud Season Dinner, April 10 at 5:00pm at St. Mary's Nutrition Center in Lewiston. For more info visit www.foodformainesfuture.org.

2010 Jim Cook Memorial Award Nominees

(comments come from emails that accompanied some nominations)

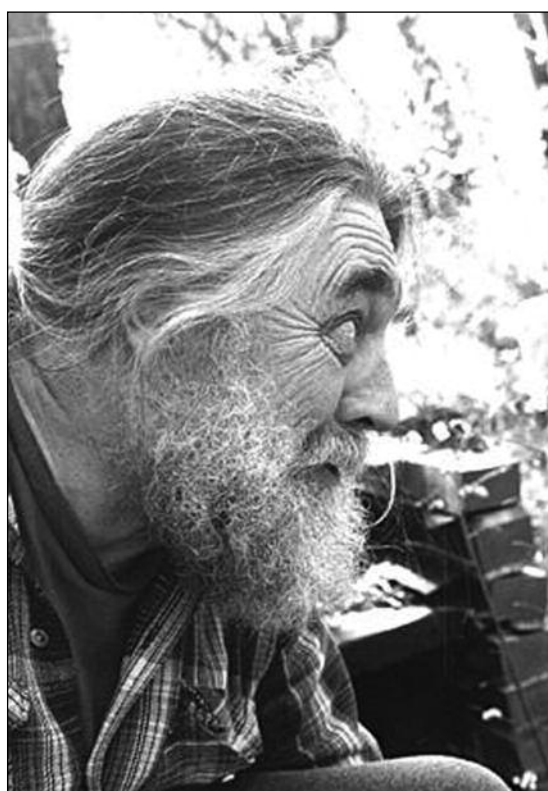
BILL & ANN SPILLER, SPILLER FARM, Wells

"Bill and Ann Spiller have been not only providing commercial truck farm produce for their own stand, but donate 1000s of pounds of produce each and every year to community organizations for the disadvantaged. Conventional grower who'd like to call himself: "Chemical Ali" while being no where near as bad as his bark."

WESTERN MOUNTAINS ALLIANCE, Farmington

"For their work in establishing WesternMaineMarket.com which has connected local farmers with folks who work during regular farmers market hours. In particular, Deborah Chadbourne has gone to incredible lengths to make the connections to keep our food local in this area."

AMBER LAMBKE, SOMEREST GRIST MILL & CO-FOUNDER, KNEADING CONFERENCE, Skowhegan
"Four years ago [Amber] co-founded the successful Kneading Conference



and is now co-owner of the Somerset Grist Mill (formerly the Somerset County Jail) in Skowhegan. She has set her remarkable leadership and visionary skills to finding ways to help her community. The contributions she is making to strategic infrastructure restoration in Skowhegan will become a sustainable economic model for other rural towns."

BOB ST.PETER, Food for Maine's Future, Sedgwick

"For trying to help Maine's producers as well as those around the world."

MIA STRONG, CO-PRODUCER EXTRAORDINAIRE, Sedgwick

"Mia is the driving force of a local buying club that makes group purchases of local food. Mia and her husband Al have contributed money so that a low-income family could have a reduced-price CSA share from a local farm. She and Al host monthly pot-luck suppers, open to all comers, at which they provide generous amounts of delicious food from local ingredients. This hos-

pitality must be quite costly but they offer it joyously. Mia is tireless in her quest to put local food on her table for her family and friends."

"Of note are her long and late night meetings at the local food co-op working to the increase co-op's local food availability AND she organized tours of many peninsula farms last growing season to increase awareness of those farms and their products. We like to call her the "locavore of the year"!"

RUSSELL LIBBY, Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association

"I would like to recommend as a well deserved recipient of the Jim Cook award for local food production and distribution. Russell has had a vision for 2 decades of strengthening

Maine's local healthy and sustainable food production. Russell's great ability to work with traditional farm sector representatives on the AG Committee of Maine, as well as with federal regulators and his own staff, board, wealthy benefactors and MOFGA's broad membership is extraordinary."

WANDA BARIL-BRAITHWAITE, RURAL COMMUNITY ACTION MINISTRY GARDENING PROGRAM, Leeds

"Wanda teaches families at risk for food shortages to grow their own, helps them establish and maintain their gardens, provides seeds and seedlings, distributes senior shares from local farmers to needy families, teaches cooking, preserving, and the nutritional advantages of local food, serves on the grant-making board of Maine Initiatives Harvest Fund, and supports local agriculture in every way possible. For getting poor Mainers hooked into the local food system, she can't be beat."

DAVE GULAK, BARREL'S COMMUNITY MARKET, Waterville

"It makes such a difference in downtown Waterville to have Barrel's there."

ROSEMONT MARKET & BAKERY, Portland

"The Rosemont is a strong and growing retail food store. [They] source meats, cheese, eggs, milk, produce, grains, oils, even mead and wine from Maine producers. I am proud to say that the Rosemont Market & Bakery has been an excellent partner and supporter in the local food scene. They represent locally grown food and make locally grown food accessible to the public every day, all year."

CARLY DELSIGNORE-BELL, Tide Mill Farm, Edmunds

"Carly has worked ceaselessly, tirelessly, energetically and wholeheartedly to link as many local producers as are available to local consumers. Carly is the foundation for the Washington County Food Alliance, a group of farms, buying clubs, farmers markets, and anything related to agriculture, with a focus on linking farm production to local consumers. She has done so much more, has toured on behalf of the dairy farmers, has worked long, thankless hours to meet deadlines and attended countless meetings, all at a substantial cost to her and her family but she does it without ever complaining or asking to be reimbursed. She truly is a role model for our younger generation to emulate."

KIRSTEN WALTER, ST. MARY'S NUTRITION PROGRAM, Lewiston

"Kirsten has made outstanding staff choices, incredible networking opportunities, essential food connections within the Lewiston-Auburn community, and special efforts to include as many income levels in all food dialogs as possible. She has overseen the growth and developments of Lots to Gardens, all of the Lewiston-Auburn farmers markets, a nutritional outreach to low income people and connections with communities who can truly help -- farmers, college students and administrators, hospital administrators, and more. Along with all of this, she is an inspiration to Maine women."

Others receiving nominations:

- MAIA CAMPOAMOR AND JACOB MENTLIK, AFTER THE FALL FARM, Montville
- MONICA MURPHY, CROSSTRAX CATERING, Unity
- TIM LIBBY, Unity, Maine
- REBA RICHARDSON AND BILL PLUECKER, HATCHET COVE FARM, Warren
- KIM LIBBY, GLEN LIBBY, and the PORT CLYDE FISHERMAN'S CO-OP, Port Clyde
- AMANDA BEAL, Student, Tufts University
- ROGER DOIRON, KITCHEN GARDENERS INTERNATIONAL
- STEPHANIE GILBERT, Farmland Protection Specialist, LAND FOR MAINE'S FUTURE
- LOCAL SPROUTS COOPERATIVE, Portland
- CRAIG LAPINE & CULTIVATING COMMUNITY, Portland ☼

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Young People Taking Matters Into Their Own Hands . . . Literally

For young peasants, 'prospective peasants', farmers, and 'wannabe farmers', these folks are making it happen

Crop Mob

(from the website www.cropmob.org)

Crop mob is primarily a group of young, landless, and wannabe farmers who come together to build and empower communities by working side by side. Crop mob is also a group of experienced farmers and gardeners willing to share their knowledge with their peers and the next generation of agrarians. The membership is dynamic, changing and growing with each new mob event.

In the past farming was much more labor intensive. Activities like planting, harvesting, processing, and barnraising often required the collective effort of entire communities. This interdependence fostered strong communities. As farming became more mechanized and reliant on petroleum based inputs, it became a more independent and solitary career. Today in the industrial farming system a few people may manage hundreds or even thousands of acres.

While nationwide the number of farms and farmers has dwindled, right now in the Triangle area of North Carolina there is a surge of new sustainable small farms. These farms are growing diversified crops on small acreage, using only low levels of mechanization, and without the use of chemical pesticides or fertilizers. This is a much more labor intensive way of farming that brings back the need for community participation.

Many crop mobbers are apprentices or interns on these sustainable farms. The need for community participation matches a desire for community among young people interested in getting into farming.

The crop mob was conceived as a way of building the community necessary to practice this kind of agriculture and to put the power to muster this group in the hands of our future food producers.

Any crop mobber can call a crop mob to do the kind of work it takes a community to do. We work together, share a meal, play, talk, and make music. No money is exchanged. This is the stuff that communities are made of.

For more information, please send an email to info@www.cropmob.org.

Reclaim the Fields

(from the website www.reclaimthefields.org)

Reclaim the Fields is made up of young peasants, landless and prospective peasants, as well as people who want to reassume the control over food production. Under the word "peasant", we understand people who produce food on a small scale, using it for themselves or for the community, and possibly selling a part of it. This also includes agricultural workers.

We aim at supporting and encouraging people to stay on the land and go back to the countryside. We want to



promote food sovereignty (this expression is subject to debate and discussion within our network) and peasant agriculture, particularly amongst young people and urban dwellers, as well as alternative ways of life. We are determined to create alternatives to capitalism through cooperative, collective, autonomous, real needs oriented small scale production and initiatives, putting theory into practice and linking local practical action with global political struggles.

In order to achieve this, we want to

from years of militancy and peasant life and enrich it with the perspectives and the strength of the one of us who are not peasants, or not yet. We all suffer the consequences of the same policies, and are all part of the same fight.

The Greenhorns

In the fall of 2007, while finishing a degree in Conservation and AgroEcology at U.C. Berkeley, Severine von Tscharner Fleming launched The Greenhorns, a nonprofit young farmer advocacy organization. We talked with Fleming about the inspiration for The

ness is hard, as is starting any business, and taking over a family farm from the previous generation is equally challenging—but that is a challenge we must meet, to build and sustain a durable economic foundation for the country that feeds us, and we're in it to win it.

The economic incentive isn't great, but it's work outdoors, not in a cubicle of a big bad bank. Farming is a chance to be your own boss, to produce real goods in the real world for other real people to eat and enjoy. It is satisfying, it is relevant and it is patriotic.

What role do you see The Greenhorns as an organization playing in the movement?

Our role is to pollinate, celebrate and education the growing network of young farmers in this country, and to give aspiring farmers and eaters access to the stories and philosophies that inform this movement of new growers. In our film, blog, radio show and upcoming essay collection we champion farmers all over the country—each of whom struggles with the particular obstacles of their place, and each of whom carries part of the wisdom of the team.

Why is it important to bring young people back to Agriculture?

The Average American farmer is now 59 years old. Pretty darn close to retirement. That's the big reason. Another reason is that we have lost millions of farmers in this country over the last 20 years, and as a result have also lost a lot of the services and vitality in our rural areas. Federal policy has played its part in the 'bigger is better' foodsystem

we have today, and we'll need a Farm-bill supportive of new growers, and of sustainable practices that will keep our land productive for generations to come. Consolidation and concentration in the industry has meant that new players have a hard time getting in in many sectors -- but still there are new entrants, particularly in the direct marketing/specialty categories where the ratio of revenue to investment is more favorable. In the last census only 3% of farmer were under the age of 35, this latest census it was up to 6%. More young people are getting into farming, officially- its not just a hunch anymore.

Recently, Fleming joined forces two other young farmers to launch a National Young Farmers Coalition. "The coalition is for young farmers by young farmers," she explains. "It's an institution we've formed to provide practical, social and policy support for our members, ourselves and for the generations of young farmers that will follow in our footsteps." Their goal is substantial - 1 million new farmers in the next decade, and a future in which ambitious, agriculturally minded young Americans can get access to land and can farm well, profitably and sustainably.

For more information on the Greenhorns, visit <http://thegreenhorns.net>.



Reclaim the Fields feeding people at the Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen, December 2009.



Dirty crop mobbers get a rice field ready for planting.

build up local actions and activists group, as well as cooperating with the existing initiatives. This is the reason why we choose not to be a homogeneous group, but to open up to the diversity of the actors fighting the capitalist food production model.

We want to address the issues of access to land, collective farming and seeds rights and exchange and hope to strengthen the impact of our work through the cooperation with activists, who focus on different tasks but share the same social vision.

Nevertheless, our openness has some limits. We are determined to take back the control over our lives and refuse any form of authoritarianism and hierarchialism. We engage to respect nature and living beings, but will neither accept nor tolerate any form of discrimination, be it based on race, religion, gender, nationality, sexual orientation or social status.

We refuse and will actively oppose every form of exploitation of other people. With the same force and energy, we will act in kindness and conviviality, making solidarity a concrete practice of our daily life.

We support the struggles and visions of la Via Campesina, and work to strengthen them amongst the young European people. We wish to share the knowledge and the experience coming

Greenhorns, the trajectory this young organization has taken, and her goals for the future.

The following is an interview with Greenhorns founder Severine von Tscharner by Anne Dailey.

What inspired you to start The Greenhorns?

I started a farm at my college, and worked on a bunch of farms over the summers. I was really impressed with the young farmers I'd known, and had an instinct that these strong, brave, really motivated young farmers were particularly potent protagonists for a sustainable American landscape. So I set out to make a documentary film about them, it's called "The Greenhorns". That documentary film turned into a non-profit organization, the only one of its kind in the country. We produce media, organize educational and social events nationally, run a mapping project, a super popular blog, a weekly radio show, a resource guidebook and more.

Why do you think this movement of Young Farmers has gained so much momentum?

More and more people are realizing that if we want a bright future in this country, we'll have to make it happen for ourselves. Farming is a direct action, a choice to live one's life in service to the community and embedded in place. Starting a farm busi-

NEWS & NOTES CONTINUED

In his nine-page ruling Tuesday, Counsell wrote that Miller, 29, had shown a sincere religious belief that would be impinged by the state law. Then the burden shifted to the state to show it had a compelling interest in animal health and food safety that could not be served by something less restrictive than mandatory livestock registration.

Read full story at <http://www.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/87184992.html>

FEEDING DEPENDENCY, STARVING DEMOCRACY... STILL

Updated report critical of top-down effort to rebuild Haiti

By Nikhil Aziz, Grassroots International

(Mar 2, 2010) Twelve years ago, Grassroots International released a research study entitled "Feeding Dependency, Starving Democracy: USAID Policies in Haiti." Offering an in-depth examination of USAID development policies in Haiti, the study concluded that, as the title suggests, official aid actually damaged the very aspects of Haitian society it was allegedly trying to fix -namely it created a lack of democracy and too much dependency.

The study was particularly critical of the development community for making Haiti into a net food importer when it had been nearly self-sufficient, and in fact a major rice producer. Despite, or because of, years of aid programs, and structural adjustment policies imposed by international financial institutions and donor countries, the study found that Haiti's food dependency was actually increasing. This disturbing result was partially caused by subsidized food aid programs which fed transnational agribusiness corporations but didn't help Haitians grow food for their families.

As recently as 2007, a USAID agronomist told Grassroots International that there simply was no future for Haiti's small farm sector -a callous prognosis for the nation's three million-plus small farmers (of a population of 9 million). In a nutshell, USAID's plan for Haiti and many other poor countries is to push farmers out of subsistence agriculture as quickly as possible. Farmers that might otherwise be supported to grow food are frequently engaged as laborers in work-for-food programs. Rather than pursue innovative programs to keep rural food markets local and SUPPO11 food sovereignty, misguided aid programs encourage farmers to grow higher value export crops such as cashews, coffee and more recently, jatropha for agrofuels.

View full article and download report at <http://grassrootsonline.org/news/articles/feeding-dependency-starving-democracy-still> ✪

Improving Life for Rural People Brings Organizations Together

Food for Maine's Future is pleased to announce partnership with Sustainable Harvest International as FMF's fiscal sponsor

Founded in 1997 by Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Florence Reed, Sustainable Harvest International addresses the tropical deforestation crisis in Central America by providing farmers with sustainable alternatives to slash-and-burn agriculture.

Since 1997, SHI has expanded its reach from the one program in Honduras to also include programs in Panamá, Belize and Nicaragua. SHI recently established La Fundacion Cosecha Sostenible Honduras (the Sustainable Harvest Honduras Foundation) as an independent affiliate. After a transition period, that pilot program has become responsible for its own management and funding. SHI thus facilitates implementation of a program that allows poor farmers to take responsibility for reversing environmental degradation and achieving economic viability within their own countries.

SHI has planted more than 2.6 million trees and converted thousands of acres to sustainable uses; thereby saving tens of thousands of acres of tropical forest from slash-and-burn destruction. SHI works with families and students throughout Honduras, Panama, Belize and Nicaragua implementing alternatives to slash-and-burn farming, the leading cause of rainforest destruction in the region.



SHI is improving diet and teaching sustainable agriculture to all ages. Here a young boy holds an avocado seedling ready for planting.

Working with local Field Trainers, SHI participants have:

- Planted more than **2.6 million trees**
- Converted more than **12,000 acres** to sustainable and diversified land use



- Worked with **1,769 families** in **151 communities**
- Graduated **45 communities**

During Fiscal Year 2009 (July 1, 2008 - June 20, 2009), SHI Field Trainers and participants:

- Planted **309,675 trees**
- Started **180 vermiculture (worm casting) projects**
- Built **149 wood-conserving stoves**
- Created **10 community rural banks**
- Provided over **225 loans totaling \$28,000**
- Taught environmental education, nutrition and sustainable agriculture in **13 rural schools**
- Established over **1,200 vegetable, fruit and medicinal gardens**
- Worked with families in **106 communities**
- Employed **50 field staff** in Belize, Honduras, Panama and **10 in the U.S.**

For more information visit www.sustainableharvest.org. ✪

Bringing It Home: Lots to Gardens

Productive Youth and Vibrant Community Grow in Urban Lewiston Gardens

by Merry Stetson Hall

Organizations like Lots to Gardens, Cultivating Community, Winter Cache and Local Sprouts are bringing gardening and local food to our urban neighbors. Maine's sustainable agriculture community is that much stronger and more inclusive for it. Our urban youth are inspired and empowered.

Deacon, a Youth Intern at Lots to Gardens in Lewiston expresses his enthusiasm for their innovative program:

"There's nothing else quite like loving where you are and the land upon which you live and garden. I love being able to share this with other young people in my neighborhood."

Kirsten Walter, the Lots to Gardens, introduced me to several of the young interns who have come through the program and are now passing it on to younger kids. I could see this empowerment in their glowing faces and hear it in their enthusiastic voices. Bridget, one of the young interns, said:

"It is exciting to see the energy among the young people even in the middle of winter. They are proud to share what they know, like 'I plant chard instead of spinach because it lasts all summer, not just for a few weeks.' I like the way Lots to Gardens is



Lots to Gardens' programs include apartment-side and community gardens that provide garden space to more than sixty families and senior citizens.

plugged into so many aspects of the community. It's multifaceted."

Amy, another Youth Intern, said:

"The gardens create a safe space for young people to contribute. We are caring for life and seeing it grow. We are taking a stand and making a statement for the place where we live. I'm excited to be doing something that builds pride in the 'home place.' The youths I work with see palpable results in the garden within seven weeks and then take their produce to the farmers' market where customers say, 'Wow, those are beautiful veggies!'"

Missy, also an intern, added:

"When one kid says to another, 'Hey, don't step there! I have something growing there,' it's different from adults imposing seemingly arbitrary rules. Kids get to see what happens to plants, so they respect each other's authority."

Lots to Gardens, sponsored by St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston, uses sustainable urban agriculture to create access to fresh food and to nurture healthy youth and a healthy community.

Kirsten Walter, the director, explains:

"We teach people how to grow their own food, provide affordable access to fresh food, and involve youth as leaders. We help families and youth develop skills and build power for lifelong and community-wide change. Since 1999, we have built fifteen gardens and green spaces in four diverse neighborhoods."

Lots to Gardens headquartered at the Wallace School on Walnut Street along with a food pantry and St. Mary's Community Nutrition program. Kirsten feels that their inner city loca-

See **LOTS TO GARDENS** on page 19

PROPOSAL TO TURN CO-OP INTO CO-PRODUCER

continued from page 15

philosophy and an approach to land use which works with natural rhythms and patterns. It weaves together the elements of microclimate, annual and perennial plants, animals, water, and soil management. It weaves these things together with human needs into intricately connected and productive communities. It is a design system that can be used on a lawn, a yard, a farm, or a village.

The Process

First we will send a composite soil sample to the Maine Soil Testing Service at the University of Maine for an analysis of the soil's mineral composition, organic matter content and a lead scan. Jesse will prepare his initial sketch for the Design Charette, which will be a cooperative garden planning session in April. Although the basic structure and landscape work (swales will probably be dug) will be determined by Jesse, the rest of the canvas awaits. Decisions on specific perennial species, what will become of the yields, how the garden will be stewarded, etc., will start to be addressed by co-op members at the Design Charette. Then Jesse will produce the final design illustration and technical report. The installation day(s) will be approached as a series of workshops on various techniques. Topics will include: swales, soil amendments and sheet mulching. We're hoping people will want to donate plants – Grammam's blueberries, blackberries, raspberries or whatever.

The Challenge

So far most people are really excited about the project. The whole idea of an urban farm, or an archipelago of them, is inspiring. Rockland just had a big tree fiasco with CMP's contracted tree service butchering trees so badly that the work was halted and the issue heard by the City Council. A couple Rockland residents mentioned in their remarks at the meeting the possibility of becoming a Tree City USA. No one mentioned the book *Food Not Lawns* by Heather Flores, and no one mentioned permaculture or edible forest gardens. So we enter into the conversation. We hope that our work is half as common-sensibly contagious as we think it will be. Imagine Jerusalem artichokes blooming along the white picket fence, sidewalks awash in apples. The challenge then becomes: What to do with all the perennial surplus food? We wish this challenge on Rockland, and we wish this challenge on the entire state of Maine.

For more information contact Jason Rawn, rawnjason@gmail.com, or Jesse Watson, midcoastpermaculture@gmail.com.

LOTS TO GARDENS continued

tion and the synergy among the three programs and between them and the folks at St. Mary's strengthen them all to serve the diverse Lewiston population better.

"Through Lots to Gardens' gardening and nutrition programs, hundreds of families and elders have grown their own food, learned to value fresh and local produce, and learned to prepare nutritious meals.

5th Annual Local & Sustainable Foods Conference: Building Urban/Rural Alliances & The Mud Season Dinner – a Maine Foods Meal

JOIN US!

April 10 & 11, 2010

St. Mary's Nutrition Center, Lewiston, Maine

Sponsored by Food for Maine's Future, Lots to Gardens,
Healthy Oxford Hills, WERU, and the Lewiston Public Library.



SATURDAY ALL-DAY CONFERENCE 8:30am - 4:30pm EXPLORING KEY ISSUES & PLANNING FOR ACTION

Through workshops, discussions, and facilitated planning sessions conference participants will explore key food access issues and help create a set of *Action Plans* to guide our growing movement towards an *equitable food system with justice and dignity for all*.

RURAL FOOD FOR RURAL PEOPLE — What are the principal barriers to rural Mainers' feeding their own communities a diverse diet? How do we help rural producers sell locally first?

CULTIVATING MAINE'S FUTURE FOOD LEADERS — Creating a sustainable food system involves investing in our youth. How can youth and adults work together to better the food system? What role does farm-to-school and school gardens play in this? How do youth get a seat at the table for decisions that affect them?

WE CAN GET THERE FROM HERE: GRASSROOTS FOOD

DISTRIBUTION — Maine has a number of successful grassroots models for getting food from farm or sea to our plates. How do we support and expand what is working? How do we create what is needed?

GROWING FOOD EVERYWHERE: THE HOME ECONOMY

& FOOD SECURITY — What support and resources exist for homesteaders, subsistence farmers and fisherman, community gardeners? How can we help each other to build a food economy based on bread labor, interdependence, and self-reliance?

Registration for the Saturday, April 10 conference is \$15-50 sliding scale, suggested donation is \$25. The Mud Season Dinner is \$15-150 sliding scale, suggested donation is \$20. No one will be turned away for lack of funds. Members of Food for Maine's Future receive free admission to Saturday's conference.

Sign up today! In the spirit of solidarity, bring a non-perishable food item for the St. Mary's Food Bank.

Space is limited for all events.

Register on-line at

www.foodformainesfuture.org
or by calling 207-244-0908.

Doors open at 8:00 am

We hope to see you there!



Through our youth training programs, sixty youth have given a summer of service to others; received job training, and participated in empowering themselves and their community. Hundreds of other youth and adults participate in the gardens as volunteers, learners, and leaders. Families and senior citizens grow their own food in community gardens or in apartment side beds.

Youth and children grow food for those vulnerable to hunger in our city, and experience the sweet rewards of enjoying the food they grow. Our nutrition programming includes cooking and nutrition classes that teach healthy eating habits, cooking demonstrations at the Farmers' Market, and many free recipes and nutrition information."

Food is only one of the things they grow. They also nurture youth leadership, providing meaningful learning, service, and work experiences. Community is the final crop they grow.

"Using the gardens as a classroom and community space, adults and youth grow food for themselves and their own community, resulting in healthier families, fresh food on the tables of hungry people, and

stronger, more just communities. We believe that it is essential that people affected by hunger are the leaders in building sustainable food systems. An example of this is our Resident Garden Coordinator Training at Hillview Apartments. This year, four gardeners led their neighbors in food production, supported the children's garden and programs, and developed a sense of pride in themselves and their neighborhood."

Lots to Gardens is significantly transforming lives and communities.

This article is based on the field notes for Merry Hall's book, BRINGING FOOD HOME: THE MAINE EXAMPLE, available from amazon.com. You can receive a signed copy of the book for \$23 including shipping from Merry Hall, 41 Katherine's Way, Sabattus, Maine 04280. ☼

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URBAN SEEDS OF COMMUNITY continued from page 1

through gardening, music, and celebration. The work of More Gardens and many people and organizations in New York (including money from Bette Midler) preserved the 700 hundred gardens that were slated to be bulldozed. Through this experience my path as an urban gardener, local foods cook and teacher, and community organizer was sprouted.

Ten years later, I am living in Portland and continuing to work to build our connection to the land and grow community. Maine has many inspiring models for projects that build urban and rural connections and start gardens in cities. These projects have inspired me and thousands of youth and adults to take action in our own lives to grow and share food and build community. Two and a half years ago, we started Local Sprouts Cooperative, a worker-owned cooperative focused on providing people with local and organic food and holistic learning through cooking for our community. We cook with many people in our community through our Community Supported Kitchen, Catering and Learning Programs. This has given me the opportunity to work with many amazing groups and people that are growing food and community.

Victory Gardens

One of my first introductions to strong urban and rural connections through agriculture was the Victory Gardens Project. The Victory Gardens Project was started in 1996 by three Maine farmers and one political prisoner. Together they had the idea to grow a project that would bring city residents from East Coast cities to work on the farm in Athens, Maine, and then distribute that food to the people of those cities and to political prisoners. Working together in the gardens, people built strong connections and increased support between communities. For some people from New York City, Boston or New Jersey, this was their first time to get out of the city and get their hands in the dirt. Back in the city, Victory Gardeners were inspired to start or participate in community gardens and share knowledge about political prisoners and other issues. Here in Portland a group of people started the Portland Victory Gardens Project. When I first moved back to Maine, I started to visit the Victory Gardens Project in Athens and was inspired by the commitment to growing and building connections while also sharing critiques of the industrial capitalist system. Rather than just holding signs or chanting at protest, we planted tomatoes and shelled beans. Every October, hundreds of Victory Gardeners came together for the annual harvest celebration. Youth from Harlem, Portland activists, Maine farmers and many others came together to harvest carrots, potatoes, onions and other crops to share with their communities. Food was a connection and tool for building a movement for ecological and social change.

Cultivating Community

A group of youth from Cultivating Community brought the rhubarb harvest from Turkey Hill Farm into the Local Sprouts Community Kitchen. Together, we worked with the Food Director of Portland Schools to freeze rhubarb that would be made into



A Cob oven in the garden at Casa Del Sol, South Bronx.

rhubarb muffins at Portland schools in the fall. Cultivating Community's mission is feeding our hungry, empowering our youth and healing our planet. Over the last decade they have grown into a vibrant and diverse organization that works both in community gardens in Portland and farms in Cape Elizabeth and Lisbon. The core of Cultivating Community's programs are their

area) and Lots to Gardens (from Lewiston). Rooted in Community (RIC) is an annual conference focused on a youth community food projects particularly urban food projects. The conference, held at Southern Maine Community College in South Portland, brought together almost 150 youth and adults to share about creating community food projects across the country. Local

“Food was a connection and tool for building a movement for ecological and social change.” —Jonah Fertig

youth apprenticeship programs which work with a group of youth in gardening, composting, cooking, and sharing food with their community. Through the program, youth grow into empowered leaders who know how to grow and cook local foods. This past year, Cultivating Community has become the supporting organization for the New American Sustainable Agriculture Project (NASAP). NASAP supports immigrant and refugee farmers to become farmers here in Maine. Immigrants and refugees are given access to land on a farm in Lisbon and in a community garden in Portland and provided with support to build new farm businesses.

Winter Cache Project

On a cool March day, I headed out to Cumberland with a few friends and a few folks I had just met that day. We got out of the car, and began uncovering hay to sink our hands in the cold earth and harvest spring parsnips. The Winter Cache Project started in 2004 when they began growing food in Cumberland. They focus on growing winter storage vegetables that they then store in a root cellar on Munjoy Hill in Portland and distribute to people throughout the winter. They also freeze, ferment and can foods to expand what's available in the winter. People who work on the project throughout the growing season are able to pick-up a bi-weekly share of storage vegetables. Winter Cache also offers a variety of workshops on preserving the harvest, fermentation, and other topics. At the farm in Cumberland, Winter Cache is able to grow the connection to the land for many city dwellers.

Youth from all over the country enjoyed a meal of local Maine foods while looking out over the ocean. All day they were learning together, working in the garden and cooking at the Rooted In Community Conference in 2009, hosted by Cultivating Community, the Food Project (from the Boston

would focus on cooking local foods and teach others about cooking in a holistic environment; we wanted to create a learning cafe where people would learn through cooking local food. We started with local and organic catering and then in 2008 began Maine's first Community Supported Kitchen, which extends the concept of Community Support, which had been so successful in Community Supported Agriculture, to prepared foods and cooking. At the same time we initiated our Community Food and Learning Programs that work in collaboration with local schools and non-profits to teach about cooking with local foods. This spring, our vision of a community cafe is coming into reality with the opening of Local Sprouts Cafe in Portland. We will open with a seasonal local foods menu, classes, and performances. The Cafe will be home to the Bomb Diggity Bakery which works with adults with intellectual disabilities in a baking and creative arts program. We want Local Sprouts Cafe to be a center for local foods in Portland and at our location at 649 Congress St. we can engage and connect with many people through sharing food.

I am inspired by community food projects around Maine and the world. People are envisioning new ways of living in the city that build community, grow food and increase our connection to the land. Mutually supportive relationships are growing between urban and rural communities. In each community garden, kitchen, and farm, there are the seeds of transformation. Together we have the power to water and nurture those seeds and grow a new ecological culture in the city.

Jonah Fertig, is a worker-owner and founder of Local Sprouts Cooperative. He is a cook, father, artist, teacher, gardener and community organizer. Learn more about Local Sprouts at www.localsproutscooperative.com or contact Jonah at jonah@localsproutscooperative.com.

Sprouts Cooperative coordinated food and engaged all the participants in preparing and serving the food. It was an inspirational experience as youth from all different backgrounds and walks of life were able to connect through food and gardening.

Local Sprouts Cooperative

Local Sprouts Cooperative started with the idea of creating a business that

BECOME A MEMBER!

SUPPORT FOOD FOR MAINE'S FUTURE

Food for Maine's Future is now a membership organization! Being a member gets you two issues of Saving Seeds mailed to you, and one free classified ad per year. You also receive free admission to our annual Local and Sustainable Food Conference and the good feeling that comes with supporting grassroots activism in Maine. Memberships start at \$25.

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www.foodformainesfuture.org or call our office at 207-244-0908.