

Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2007

2007 PA FARM SHOW

CELEBRATING AGRICULTURE'S WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

PENN STATE



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What Women Farmers Want

The Pennsylvania Farm Show's third annual Women in Agriculture Day highlighted the growing number of female farmers and how they're changing the face of the agricultural community.

The program, *Celebrating Agriculture's Women Entrepreneurs*, really said it all. The women who spoke at the conference, a diverse array of entrepreneurs, civil servants and policymakers, had faced many challenges but had clearly been empowered by their involvement in agriculture, and were there to celebrate their skills and experiences. Their energy and dynamism were palpable as they traded insights, practical advice, and personal stories with wry humor and passion. Many of them were truly entrepreneurs.

The day, created by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network, celebrated the unique perspective women bring to agriculture without separating the female endeavor from universal business principles. Many of the speakers, from Marianne Fivek of Penn State Extension to Karen Powell, a spokesperson for the

USDA's Risk Management Association, sought to empower the attendees with pertinent, useful information. Rather than being solely an activist organization promoting abstract ideals, PA-WAgN anchors those ideals in down-to-earth information sharing.

Women farmers are in the minority everywhere, and welcome the opportunity to connect with others in the same boat.

Women want financial security, but not through an input-intensive, disconnected form of agriculture. Needs assessment surveys put out by PA-WAgN revealed that "aside from workshops with relevant and specific content and opportunities for social support" constituents wanted to know more about direct marketing of value-added products.

The emphasis on "value-added" implies these female farmers don't want to simply sell raw commodities like corn or soybeans, which are basically just industrial building blocks, but they want to be in control of an integrated production process, from planting the seeds to putting the jar, can, package, or craft on the shelf and talking it up to customers. Many of the speakers recognized producing organically

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CELEBRATING AGRICULTURE'S WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

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was by itself a form of adding value.

Farmer and activist Cheryl Rogowski argued in her keynote address that women bring a deep understanding of how to intuit and respond to the consumer's needs and the desire to establish a mutual relationship with the consumer. They bring perhaps a deeper understanding because they are also on the consumer end much more frequently than men.

Engaging with the consumer not only builds a sturdy, loyal customer base, but commands higher prices, and, by eliminating the middle man, returns to the grower the majority of her profits. She and many of the other women present genuinely want to serve their communities—"to give their customers access to wholesome, minimally processed foods, and provide a window into how their food is produced." The women who go for the direct marketing approach tend to be the women who care about quality over quantity, diversity of product over uniformity, and collaboration with the consumer.

Our agricultural system has been traditionally male-dominated, but the trend of farm consolidation and loss of smaller farms have created a chance to partially remake the infrastructure, a space which women have jumped to fill. Although Pennsylvania has lost 2,000 farms in recent years, it has gained approximately 1,000 managed by women. Organic farming in particular is a niche that may be easier for women with non-farm backgrounds to break into, since conventional farming is more capital-intensive, large-scale, and difficult as a start-up if one is not already a landowner.

Rogowski is the recipient of the 2004 MacArthur Foundation Genius Award for proving the survivability and viability of small farms and for her work in reaching out to the community. She started a low-income CSA geared to local senior citizens and disadvantaged neighborhoods, with a reduced price scale for shares. She has also created a radio program in NPR format to discuss the importance of family farms and local food. Her work reflects a consciousness of both social and environmental justice, and the skewed value systems prevalent in our society.

Rogowski's words of wisdom for building public awareness (through free advertising channels such as press releases) are very telling: "Don't be afraid to toot your own horn, but be gracious. Claim what you have done and what is your own."

Dr. Paul Hepperly of The Rodale Institute gave a presentation that highlighted the essential differences

between men and women and what this implies for women's role in agriculture. Hepperly emphasized health awareness as one of the major reasons women should care about and get involved with improving agriculture.

Newly elected state representative Barbara McIlvaine Smith brought a political and feminist perspective to the discussion. "It is the norm, often the birthright, for men to be politically powerful," she contented, "but women (and especially farmers) are more likely to step up out of a grassroots, populist conviction about a particular issue."

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff reinforced the importance of politics and the sense that our leaders are listening to small farmers and women farmers in particular.

There were many notes of promise and innovation throughout the program. Kim Tait who runs a diverse retail outlet at Tait Farms covered the importance of responding to consumer trends driven by novelty. "The consumer is always attracted to a "new and improved" yet familiar product," she said, "but the timeless underlying values of convenience and nutrition should always be on the radar."

Roxanne Christensen, coauthor of SPIN farming, a learning series which details how to grow commercially on under an acre, urged women to respond to the market with innovation and creativity. SPIN farming, designed for limited urban land, requires very few off-farm inputs, utilizes close local markets (which tend to be especially diverse in the urban landscape), puts out little waste, and maximizes the available land with high-value crops (such as salad mixes) and intensive relay cropping.

Barbara Gerlach of the Farm Vacation Association emphasized the unique opportunities in agro-tourism, from U-pick festivals to petting zoos and rodeos, "mixing entertainment with consumerism to draw customers to the farm." (This is a common technique in the mainstream economy, a way to get consumers to spend more time and, thus, more money in consumer spaces. Think Cabela's stuffed game-animal exhibits.) Yet on farms, this serves an additional social function by building rural communities and connecting like-minded consumers.

There is no doubt that women's roles on the farm are expanding. They may always have performed an integrated array of tasks, but these are now taking the shape of leadership and responsibility and reaching beyond their traditionally invisible, under-the-economic-radar-but-crucial scope. Women of all stripes are

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FIELD DAYS

KITCHEN INCUBATOR TOUR

On November 17, 2006, Pennsylvania Women's Agriculture Network Northeast Region sponsored a focus group and get together hosted by Keystone College, Northeast Pennsylvania's oldest educational institution located in La Plume, PA, Lackawanna County. Together they hosted a day long brainstorming session with a diverse group of women, ranging from extension educators, college professors, dairy farmers, to CSA operators, chefs, and many others. The reason for the gathering was to define how PA-WAgN can serve farmers better and what kinds of workshops, field days, and trainings could be provided to support women farmers/gardeners in their agricultural endeavors.

Donna Skog Grey, Penn State Extension Educator and Heidi Secord, Josie Porter Farm operator and PA-WAgN Northeast Regional Representative, moderated the workshop. They identified numerous future workshops for the region including but not limited to the following:

- Farmer-to- Chef /Chef-to-Farmer workshops.
- Special workshops focused on agricultural business skills with Extension and the Small Business Development Council (SBDC), such as computer training.
- Season-extension workshops.
- Agritourism and Pick-Your-Own operations and how to make that happen, combined with legal/insurance issues surrounding these agricultural models.
- Diversifying dairy operations: A How-To-Guide!
- Planning for the future of the farm/farm succession planning.
- Internet marketing and how to utilize this new tool in the farm business.
- Farm safety and farm mechanics for women.
- Transitioning to organic dairy/beef/hay/vegetables.
- Value-added products (dairy cheeses, yoghurt, jams, and other products).

Although this list is not exhaustive of the ideas generated at this meeting, there seemed to be a general consensus that these kinds of workshops were needed. One major theme that came up numerous times is the need for more demonstration projects and research programs. Women felt if they could visit these projects that they could walk away with a greater understanding of how to accomplish similar ventures on their own farms.

Another major theme was the need for establishing a database on PA-WAgN's website with a list of members and their type of farm operation, the farmer's expertise, and their willingness to answer questions from other members. A predominant theme in almost all of WAgN's workshops is how much we learn from one another and how important our support network is to us, once we have tapped into it. So many women farmers in Pennsylvania are feeling isolated and yet we have this organization that can really be of help to them with ideas, support, and technical expertise. We all agreed that we needed to reach out to women who are in the agricultural sector and make an effort to sign up more women to be part of PA-WAgN.

Lisa Hall, the project coordinator for the Kitchen Incubator at Keystone College gave us a short presentation, sharing her mission and vision for the project, and giving a tour of their facilities. Keystone College is a fully accredited, independent, private liberal arts college. In May 2005, the Kitchen Incubator at Keystone College was established to help local entrepreneurs start and maintain successful food production businesses. Funded by a U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Business Enterprise Grant, the program provides business planning and food production assistance to local entrepreneurs. The program features a shared-use commercial kitchen with state-of-the-art equipment. The program serves farmers looking to develop value-added products, restaurant owners interested in producing salad dressings and sauces or other products for retail sale, talented bakers or cooks who want to sell their goods, and anyone looking to start a food business in their home or local community!

We look forward to having similar events throughout the NE region in 2007 as new leaders step forward and host similar get-togethers, potlucks, and other informal gatherings. Please contact Heidi Secord at cchord01@hotmail.com or Linda Moist at lsm9@psu.edu to schedule a workshop, field day, or a similar informal gathering for the NE Region. And if you don't see something on the workshop list that you are interested in, let us know. We are here to support you and make your operation more successful!

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INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS

BUILDING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Business planning isn't always an easy and enjoyable experience; in fact, it's downright difficult. Gathering all those records, deciding what your business strategies should be, and getting farm business partners to see things the same way can be a daunting task. It's much easier to keep laboring away at your day-to-day work and not think about where you and your business are heading. But as the saying goes, failing to plan is planning to fail. So PA-WAgN members gathered in Butler, Pennsylvania, for a two-day business planning workshop. Our goal was to develop detailed farm business plans that we could take to our lenders and accountants.

The program, directed by Jeff Hyde, Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics, and Extension Educator Amber Lockawich, guided participants through the business planning process from identifying values and goals, to projecting a balance sheet and developing a marketing plan.

Armed with our pre-workshop homework completed (collecting farm records and reading the assignments), we tackled the job of identifying where we want our businesses to be in ten years and planning how to get there. "I had been planning from season to season, and not thinking about the long term," said one participant. "Jeff and Amber challenged me to identify my personal values, to reflect those in my short- and long-term planning, and to work toward a goal."

The workshop packed a great deal of information in just two days, but to our surprise, it turned out to be enjoyable. Jeff and Amber had answers for all the hard questions, and encouraged farmers to share ideas for record keeping, marketing, and improving profitability.

"For me, this workshop was a necessary evil," one participant said. "I needed to leave with a presentable business plan because I had put it off too long. But I'm so glad I came because I made progress toward my goal. I was also inspired by the other farmers' experiences and enjoyed being able to learn from them as well."

If you'd like a copy of the resource guide we used, *Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses*, you may order one for \$17. The publication, developed by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture and published by the Sustainable Agriculture Network, can be ordered online at <http://www.sare.org/publications/business.htm> or by calling 301-374-9696.

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responsible for this shift in visibility and power, and the PA-WAgN group is but one cross-section of that constituency. Both the bold entrepreneurs and the women who help women, whether they work for an NGO, the government itself, or the farmers on the ground sharing tried and true advice, are on the rise.

original article by Genevieve Slocum

This article has been condensed and reprinted with permission from The New Farm, Rodale Institute's monthly newsletter. For the original article in its entirety, visit <http://www.newfarm.org/features/2007/0307/pawagn/slocum.shtml>.

THANK YOU!

PA-WAgN thanks the following event organizers for their tremendous efforts to bring women in agriculture an informative & enjoyable day:
Cheryl Cook & Kyle Nagurny, PA Department of Agriculture; Lynda Farrell, Blue Heron Consulting; K. J. Wagner, Farm Show Complex & Expo Center

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http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/E_News.html

INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS

AN INTRODUCTION TO CHEESEMAKING

IS CHEESEMAKING REALLY FOR ME?

On January 17 and 18, Melanie and Mark Dietrich Cochran hosted a two-day PA-WAgN workshop at their on-farm cheese plant at Keswick Creamery in Cumberland County. They have been making raw-milk farmstead cheeses since February 2001 with milk purchased from Melanie's parents' purebred Jersey herd. In 2006, they expanded the plant and their business to include pasteurized products like whole milk yogurt, ricotta and soft cream-style cheeses. They sell their products at farmers markets in the Washington DC area as well as directly to area restaurants. This spring, they are planning to start a raw milk and dairy products Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.

Two dozen women and men, some from as far away as Colorado, spent two days finding out exactly what it takes to run a farmstead artisan cheese plant in addition to operating a dairy. The participants ranged from owners of large commercial dairies looking to add value to their current operations to educators wanting to integrate cheesemaking into their curriculum.

Regardless of background, everyone had the opportunity to witness and participate in farmstead cheesemaking.

Day one began with 1,600 pounds of that morning's milk fresh from the herd being pumped into the cheese. The group went through the entire process of making a batch of Wallaby—Keswick's Monterey Jack style cheese. Everyone helped out stirring the milk, cutting the curds, stirring the curds and finally filling the cheese molds with the appearance of bright yellow popcorn.

"We wanted to do this workshop to scale so everyone could get an accurate idea on what they were getting into if they decide to make cheese. I wanted them to feel the intensity of it," Melanie explained.

Throughout the day, Melanie also covered the basics of cheesemaking, cultures, rennet, pH, milk quality, dairy breeds and raw milk versus pasteurized. The day was concluded with a farmstead and artisan cheese tasting with a variety of artisan cheeses.



Rachel Teller cheesemaking
—Photograph courtesy of Nan McKay

On the second day, participants continued with hands-on cheesemaking after a short course in using a pasteurizer with Mark Dietrich Cochran. Using the pasteurized milk, the group made a variety of soft cheeses including Brie, a cream-style soft cheese and finally ricotta, which they were able to take home.

Melanie discussed picking recipes and marketing as well as provided a number of excellent books to look through.

The two days were a real eye-opener to those considering starting a cheesemaking operation. "There were people there who realized that someone was milking the cows, someone was making cheese, someone was feeding the heifers and at the end of the day someone has to milk the cows again," said Melanie. She wanted participants to experience what farmstead cheesemaking is all about before investing as much as \$100,000 to find out that cheesemaking isn't a

good fit for their operation.

PA-WAgN member Cathy Soult, who recently built a new milking parlor for her goat herd in Perry County and included space for a future cheesemaking venture, said, "Now I'm really excited to get things going."

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FIELD DAYS

FARM WOMEN IN TRANSITION

Dairy farmers have every right to get the blues these days, with low milk prices and rising costs for feed and energy. In this daunting economy, many farmers are exploring ways to supplement their milk checks by adding new farm ventures. PA-WAgN farmers recently gathered at Ho-Crawf Dairy in Bradford County to hear farmer Sandy Crawford discuss the challenges she has faced on her 172-acre farm, and to brainstorm innovative ways to increase farm income.

Sandy, who was widowed in 2001, defied the odds and kept her farm and her way of life, but not without sacrifice. With the help of family and friends, Sandy continued to milk 55 Holsteins and Jerseys after the death of her husband. "My girls, Jodi, Jamie, Jena, and Shelby, spent hours every day throughout their high school years caring for our livestock, milking, and cleaning the barn. They were my rock, and I couldn't have made it without them."

Now, though, the girls are moving on to college and careers, and Sandy is weighing her options. "My daughter Jenna, who does much of the milking, will soon be leaving for college. I'm considering agricultural alternatives that will require less labor," Sandy said. "I know that many farms have similar problems. With the ongoing struggles of farmers in the dairy industry to stay afloat with low milk prices, there is an urgent need for many dairies to seek a second source of income."



Ho-Crawf Dairy Holsteins in Bradford County

—Photograph courtesy of Jennifer Szweda Jordan

John Berry, Extension educator in Lehigh County, led a discussion on skills and risks for farmers. "Exploring our skills and abilities can help us identify our strengths and weaknesses and where we may need professional development," John said. "Understanding our personal risk tolerance is important and also valuable information to share with others in our operation."

John demonstrated the potential of value-added production on the farm through a discussion about the profit possibilities of common farm products.

Afterward, participants shared ideas about some ventures that have worked for them—vegetable operations, Community Supported Agriculture programs, agritourism, and more.

"Today was an excellent networking opportunity. The farmers I met made me laugh, and while I enjoyed commiserating with them, I was inspired to try some new ideas," said one participant. "I

look forward to other opportunities to make friends and connect with other women farmers."

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GOING LOCAL

THE CONFESSIONS OF A LOCAL FOODS CITIZEN-EATER

It's the first day of spring and the snow is a foot deep in my garden. Even though April breathes warmly down the back of winter, I am a realist, and understand that in spite of Punxatawny Phils' prognostications, those of us who eat local have an unbearably long time to wait for the asparagus, morels, and strawberries of spring. I was reminded of this as I walked by some frozen stumpy stalks of prematurely budding bulbs today and remembered that last night I dreamt that my daffodils and tulips had bloomed in a thousand shades of yellow and red. I understand now why April is said to be the cruelest month.

No month offers so much promise and delivers so little in the way of fresh green and growing things to eat. Only a few anemic herbs show their faces in April, and the greens not winter killed still don't have enough sun to flourish. My stored root crops are withered and soft, and most have frozen and are already on the compost pile. My onions are sprouting, my garlic has faded away to rustling husks. Of course my storage methods leave much to be desired, and I could probably find better storage varieties, but that's next year's solution to next year's problem. Right now, I'm almost out of food. And out of carbohydrates to be precise.

So I make do by begging and buying from my kind Amish neighbors who do a better job than I at storing, and from my CSA farmer who seems to find surplus in even the darkest months, and I learn how to get creative with turnips and daikon radish. I eat more frozen corn than I every thought possible and I try to congratulate myself for "diversifying" my diet and my preservation methods. I try to be grateful for these things, but what I really want is to do is sink my teeth into a really fresh tomato. Or even just a firm potato. Finally, I make a few trips to the grocery store because I am so hungry for greens and fresh fruit I think I might actually go mad.



Amy Trauger displaying a cold frame full of
spinach and salad mix

—Photograph courtesy of Jennifer Szweda Jordan

What I happen to notice there as I wander through the artificial abundance, gives me great pause. Above the shining rows of perfectly washed and impossibly identical vegetables are pictures of farms, or what appear to be farms. The one that catches my eye, as I heft a perfect pound of plastic wrapped "spring mix" into my cart is a picture of a man next to a field of lettuce. It's closely cropped, and hugged up tight to his body so the scale is impossible to tell. The man is good looking, very clean, wearing jeans and a clean t-shirt with no holes in it (major red flag) and he is poised close to, but not quite touching the lettuce. I immediately thought, oh goody, it's the nice farmer that grows lettuce for this grocery store.

Upon further inspection, however, my spring mix comes from large farms in California, as do all the other brands, and one brand just lists the "packaging" location, which was in Massachusetts. So is this guy in the picture a farmer or a farm owner? A grocery store employee? Or horrors, a model? Maybe it's a new art form; cute guy with spring mix, co-opted by grocery stores to sell lettuce to hungry young women who work out too much. In the absence of packaging information, I've concluded that he's a model, and it's only because his t-shirt was so clean and without holes. I've only ever seen that kind of perfection in a catalog, and no farmer I know actually wears something that pristine anywhere near a field. Unless, of course, he or she were modeling (with equally pristine spring mix, and I won't even get into how inadequate the perfect rows of lettuce made me feel).

I am fully aware that by eating locally, I could quite possibly be conducting unhealthy experiments on my cognitive functioning, especially in April, but this picture suddenly makes me really mad. It makes me mad in the same way that lying makes me mad. This picture has

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THE LATEST ON GENDER ISSUES

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION IN ROME

From January to April this year, my work has taken me to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome. FAO, an organization of 189 member countries, pursues the goal of achieving food security for everyone in the world. The most recent FAO report on hunger reports that 842 million people suffer from chronic



Children Eating

Photograph courtesy of Carolyn Sachs

hunger and unfortunately the number of hungry people is increasing. I have learned that the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals are key to the efforts of all UN agencies. There are eight goals, one of which is to eliminate gender inequality and empower women. This is a tall order to accomplish by 2015, so there is a lot of work to do. And this work of eliminating gender inequality and empowering women needs to be done in a context of fairly extreme poverty in many regions and lack of adequate food for many people.

To meet this goal FAO is working on a plan with four key components to promote gender equality in:

- access to sufficient, safe, and nutritionally adequate food;
- access to, control over, and management of natural resources and agricultural support services;
- policy and decision-making processes at all levels in the agriculture and rural sector;
- opportunities for on- and off-farm employment in rural areas.

My job here at FAO involves helping to develop a plan to include gender in the work of FAO during the next five years. Although it is unlikely that gender equity will be reached in agriculture by 2015, there are many activities here at FAO that focus on women farmers and rural women in different parts of the world. I thought PA-WAgN members would be interested in some of these activities. I will describe five of them here.

One project is called Dimitra, which focuses on making rural women's voices heard and empowering them through access to information. The project works with a network of organizations in Africa and the Middle East to raise awareness on gender issues for sustainable development. I met with the leaders of this group and they would be interested in collaborating with PA-WAgN. Some farmers from Senegal came to Belgium this year to meet with women farmers, so we might even think of some type of exchange program with Dimitra and the women farmers' networks in Africa and the Middle East.

March 15 was International Women's Day. FAO held a major event on gender and property rights. The issue of women's legal access to property is particularly problematic in certain regions of the world. A major concern in southern Africa is property grabbing of land and other agricultural property from widows whose



Woman Feeding Chickens

Photograph courtesy of Carolyn Sachs

husbands have died of HIV/AIDS. FAO and other international organizations are encouraging countries to give women as well as men the right to own property.

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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION IN ROME - CONTINUED...

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Also, granting women legal access to land is not sufficient if women are not aware of their rights under the law. A number of efforts are underway to inform women of their legal rights to land and to help them obtain their rights.

HIV/AIDS has taken a serious toll on agricultural production and food security in southern and eastern Africa. A large proportion of the working age population is either sick with HIV/AIDS or have died. The burden of agricultural production is now falling on grandmothers and children. FAO conducts junior farmer field schools for HIV/AIDS orphans to help them learn about agriculture, nutrition, and to cope with their losses.

Another interesting project works on biodiversity, local knowledge, and gender in Swaziland, Mozambique, and Tanzania. In those countries, women are primarily responsible for saving seeds and preserving plant genetic diversity. Their work in these areas has typically been ignored by plant geneticists, so this project tries to promote local knowledge and biodiversity to help achieve food security.

Another effort directed at improving the livelihoods of women farmers is connected with the avian influenza crisis that is affecting farmers in Asia, especially Indonesia and Vietnam. Women are the primary small-scale poultry producers, so FAO realizes it is important to provide information on diseases and veterinary care to

women farmers. Also, policies that involve culling of flocks must address the gendered dimensions of these practices, especially in countries where men and women have separate incomes.

Many more efforts at FAO are underway to improve rural people's livelihoods and promote sustainable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. In all of these areas, a few people are working hard to point out the importance of gender differences in access to food, land, forests, and water. Convincing people at the international level to take women farmers seriously and to provide support and education to women farmers is not any easier than in Pennsylvania. However, every day as I get on the elevator at FAO, I see a poster that says Women Feed the World. The poster gives me hope that someday, government and international policies will deeply understand and reflect the connection between alleviating poverty and hunger and supporting women. We all can and do make a difference.

Ciao, ciao from Roma,
Carolyn

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THE CONFESSIONS OF A LOCAL FOODS CITIZEN-EATER-CONTINUED...

(Continued from page 7)

nothing to do with agriculture, nothing to do with farmers, nothing to do with farms. It's a lie, that unless you had been depriving yourself of fresh fruits and vegetables for six months and had induced in yourself a sort of hyper vigilant pseudo-hallucinatory state (OK, I'm exaggerating here... I'm always like this) you would never think twice about it. And what really made me mad, was that it very briefly made me feel really good about being in the weird, fakey and kind of queasy world of the supermarket where all things are available at all times from all places. But it was too much like television for me not to wonder about the truth of the story it was trying to tell.

I honestly don't know the truth of the picture, and for all I know it could be some nice perfect farmer from some happy perfect local place where the spring mix is always perfect all the time, even in April, and I still don't want to buy my lettuce from him. And only because he sells his lettuce to the grocery store, and not to me. Or you. Or

your grandma. So, for a few cruel months, I find myself having to choose between vitamin deficiencies and shopping in the grocery store in the shadow of a global food system that doesn't put me or you or the people who really grew and picked our lettuce on display in our perfectly holey and dirty shirts, munching some perfectly fresh arugula still a little bit dusty from the slightly weedy field, because it was so good and fresh we couldn't stop to wash it first.

It's coming, and it's worth the wait.

Eat well, observe well and learn well. Yearn a little bit too.

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MEET YOUR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

LYNDA FARRELL

Lynda Farrell, owner of Blue Heron Consulting/Honeysuckle Hill Farms, and PA-WAgN Southeast Regional Representative, works to enhance profitability and knowledge for female farmers and to educate Pennsylvania residents about the benefits of supporting local food systems.



Lynda Farrell, Blue Heron Consulting/Honeysuckle Hill Farms
PA-WAgN Southeast Regional Representative
—Photograph courtesy of Steve Farrell

Born and raised in a non-farming community in northern New Jersey, Lynda's passion for farming developed during summer visits at relatives' dairy farms and through her father's desire to grow vegetables for his family. The fact that deer consumed a majority of her father's garden did not dampen her passion.

Lynda received a graduate degree in special education and degrees in education and English from Susquehanna University and remained in Pennsylvania ever since.

Lynda's early career path in special education was not enough to support her family since she was as a single mother which led her to accept employment in a myriad of professions including roofing and, eventually, with an investment management company. Her work there involved multi-million dollar mutual fund proposals - thus developing a firm business foundation. She later became a regional manager for an optical company in eastern Pennsylvania where she expanded her business skills.

While Lynda was expressing her career discontent, a wise friend advised, "Do what you love and the rest will follow," – a quote that changed Lynda's life and still guides her through difficult decisions. Self-assessment

cultivated the realization that Lynda was truly passionate about farming - getting her hands dirty, connecting with the earth. Lynda spent a year saving for and seeking farmland.

Undeterred by her lack of farming experience, Lynda & her husband purchased a house with ½ acre of farmable land, cleared it and put up a greenhouse. In 1990, with a sub-acre farming plan (before the trend existed), Lynda began her organic production. Labor intensive seeding and harvesting through time consuming marketing and invoicing was a one-person operation and necessitated a focus on high-dollar-yielding crops rather than quantity sales. Research and financial analysis led Lynda to the production of herbs and specialty vegetables. She met with area chefs and introduced unusual and gourmet products. She presented intriguing preparation and presentation methods, even taste-testing herbs with her clients. She encouraged chefs to be creative and, in many instances, offered exclusivity rights for a specific product with an agreement that the chef would purchase the entire crop every week for the entire growing season. Lynda quickly earned significant profits.

Lack of winter income proved problematic, leading Lynda to secure a registered kitchen license and to develop value-added items such as a line of culinary herbal vinegars, herbal jellies, bath oils, and massage oils – all using the organic herbs produced on the farm. Lynda's organically grown Kentucky Colonial mint and good-quality bourbon lent a distinctive flavor and gourmet appeal to her Mint Julep Jelly, a best-seller to specialty grocers and local restaurants. The value-added business became more lucrative than the summer crops, keeping profits high year-round. From 1990-1998, the business flourished with a continuous introduction of new and interesting items either fresh-from-the-farm or value-added.

In 1998, Lynda was forced into a farming hiatus when diagnosed with a brain tumor. One year later, her husband was diagnosed with cancer. Following their extensive treatments and lengthy recovery periods, they were both on the road to a full recovery. Lynda was ready to once again pursue her farming career and her clients were excited to have access to quality products. Disaster struck again! Lynda's greenhouse was demolished by a massive tree, halting the seed starting process. To this, Lynda responded, "The Universe spoke and I listened." Realizing that these hurdles were extremely difficult to overcome, Lynda sought a new direction. With her knowledge of education, business, and agriculture, Lynda decided to launch Blue

(Continued on page 11)

EVALUATIONS VALIDATE PA-WAGN PROGRAMS

Why did participants come to PA-WAgN events in 2006?

Most came to learn about farming and business practices. Besides education, the participants had a *focus on women*: about half came specifically to meet other women farmers in their area, a third came to become more involved with PA-WAgN, and a third came to be a better educator for women in agriculture.

Three-quarters of the participants reported they *met someone at a PA-WAgN event* with whom they will stay in contact. Benefits include receiving technical information (71%), having someone to listen and react to their ideas (59%), receiving business leads (32%), and collaboration and support (31%).

What do these participants believe?

These participants demonstrated a strong homogeneity in their values. More than 80% think that *profitability is of great importance*.

Who did these events attract?

Although most participants were farmers (73%), they ranged dramatically in years farming. About a third are long-time farmers (over 20 years), another third are new farmers (1-4 years), and the rest fell in between (5-19 years).

Other participants were primarily educators, but also representatives from agricultural businesses, the food industry, non-governmental organizations, the media, as well as student/interns, and a public official. Men comprised 7% of the participants.

Besides contact with other women for entrepreneurial reasons, what did participants take from these events in 2006?

When participants were asked about their understanding of relevant topics before and after each event, 90% reported they had increased their learning.

Additionally, the farmers indicated that the PA-WAgN event greatly inspired them to take action:

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN WITHIN THE NEXT 2 YEARS	% of farmers (N=60)
Modify my operation	75%
Become more involved in PA-WAgN	70%
Organize and present an educational event on my farm	55%

findings presented by Nancy Ellen Kiernan
Cooperative Extension Administration
nekiernan@psu.edu



MEET YOUR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

(Continued from page 10)

Heron Consulting, remaining involved in agriculture and environmental issues.

While reviewing the 2002 USDA census, Lynda noticed that agriculture had declined in Chester County and Pennsylvania but found it curious that the number of female owned and operated farms had risen by 18%. "Women are too smart to jump aboard a sinking ship so why were they pursuing careers in agriculture?" Lynda questioned. With a PA Department of Agriculture 1-year study grant, Lynda surveyed female farmers to determine if this was a short-term or long-term trend and, if long-term, what tools women needed to become successful and remain profitable.

(For a full report of Lynda's research and findings, visit: http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Growth_Women.pdf).

This research led Lynda to a group of women at Penn State University working to develop the Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network. Impressed with the organization, Lynda quickly volunteered and became one of PA-WAgN's first Steering Committee members in 2004.

Lynda's passion still lies in farming but it has taken on a new role – facilitating educational and financial growth opportunities for women in agriculture. She recently stated, "This is not only a goal but an honor. I am continually reminded of how honored and blessed I am to know these women." Future goals encompass educating children, "that milk does not come from the grocery store." And Lynda plans to become a Reiki practitioner, "focusing on children and the farmers I've met along the way."

Lynda continues to be instrumental in developing PA-WAgN programs, fostering relationships with partnering organizations, and creating a web of support in the Southeast. Lynda is an inspirational force, guiding and supporting PA-WAgN and women in agriculture.

Ann M. Stone
PA-WAgN
ams39@psu.edu



PA-WAGN IN YOUR REGION

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

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Telephone: 610-838-0176

PA-WAGN is pleased to announce two new Regional Representatives: Lynne Gelston in the Northwest & Cheryl Matulevich in the Northeast

THE KITCHEN GARDEN

MESCLUN

Spring is full of tiny miracles. The enlivened chorus of songbirds and the serenade of spring peepers, the showcase of chartreuse buds on fruit trees, the graceful bow of pink lady slippers, and, in the garden,



the emergence of tiny seedlings from barely warmed soil – all tiny miracles that awaken our spirits and spark enthusiasm as we approach a new growing season.

Taste buds are also awakened with the long-awaited, highly anticipated, fresh-from-the-garden flavors. I'm certain that Mesclun is the discovery of an impatient gardener not able to wait for lovely lettuces and herbs to reach maturity. A traditional French mesclun is a precise mixture of chervil, arugula, lettuce, and endive. However, since its growth in popularity in the United States, the term has come to represent any custom-blended mixture of young leafy greens and can include anything from leaf lettuces to an array of vegetable seedlings such as broccoli, peas, and radishes.

Whether you create your own custom-blend of salad greens or take advantage of a large variety of pre-mixed seed packages, sowing and growing baby greens is uncomplicated yet highly rewarding. Scatter seeds in finely worked soil as soon as it can be worked in early Spring, cover with a very light amount of soil, water thoroughly but gently, and protect from frosts and hungry birds with floating row covers. Maintain moisture and seedlings will emerge quickly and reach the desired harvest height of 4-6" in approximately 30-40 days. To harvest, cut greens 1-2" above soil level, leaving crowns intact. Water and fertilize harvested area and plants will generate 1 or 2 more cuttings. By using this method along with successive sowing, delicious salads can be enjoyed for several months.

When preparing a mesclun salad, keep in mind that the delicate sweetness of the immature greens should be showcased. It is important not to overpower their freshness with the use of a complex dressing. Simply drizzle with a good quality extra-virgin olive oil or nut oil, add a dash of Champagne or raspberry vinegar, top with some finely minced fresh herbs such as tarragon or chives, add an edible flower or two to each serving, and enjoy one of Spring's many tiny miracles.

Ann Stone
PA-WAgN
ams39@psu.edu



Mixed Baby Greens with Tarragon Vinaigrette

- 1 1/2 teaspoons Dijon-style mustard
- 1 shallot, minced
- 4 teaspoons Champagne vinegar
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh tarragon leaves
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 cups mixed baby greens
- minced chives (optional)
- nasturtium or pansy blossoms (optional garnish)

Whisk together the mustard, shallot, vinegar, tarragon, and salt and pepper to taste; add the oil in a stream, whisking, and continue whisking until the vinaigrette is emulsified. Add the greens and toss the salad well. Sprinkle with minced chives. Top with 2-3 blossoms.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

—CHEESEMAKING— BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

BASIC FARMSTEAD CHEESEMAKING WORKSHOP



MAY 30-31, 2007

PA-WAGN & PENN SOIL RC&D COUNCIL
PRESENT

**BASIC FARMSTEAD CHEESEMAKING
WITH MELANIE DIETRICH
MERCER, PA**

THIS 2-DAY WORKSHOP IS DESIGNED FOR EXPERIENCED AND BEGINNING CHEESEMAKERS. LEARN ABOUT MILK QUALITY; INGREDIENTS USED IN CHEESE MAKING; PROCESSES FOR MAKING A VARIETY OF CHEESES; TECHNIQUES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR AGING CHEESE; AND STEPS TO ESTABLISH A BUSINESS AS A FARMSTEAD OR ARTISAN CHEESEMAKER. THIS IS A HANDS-ON OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SEVERAL KINDS OF CHEESE.

**MAXIMUM REGISTRATION: 20 PEOPLE
COST: \$180**

**TO REGISTER, CALL:
PENN SOIL RC&D AT 814-226-8160**



PA-WAGN & PDA PRESENT A TOUR OF
THE RODALE INSTITUTE
KUTZTOWN, PA
JUNE 13, 2007
10:00 A.M.—4:15 P.M.

JOIN US AS WE TOUR THE FARM AND LEARN ABOUT THE LATEST RESEARCH TRIALS IN ORGANIC CROP PRODUCTION AND VISIT THE COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA) PROGRAM ON THE FARM.

A PRESENTATION OF PDA RISK MANAGEMENT TOOLS IS INCLUDED.

REGISTRATION FEE IS \$15
(INCLUDES LUNCH)

REGISTER ONLINE AT:
<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Register9-5.html>

OR CONTACT LINDA MOIST AT
814-865-7031 OR LSM9@PSU.EDU

DIRECTIONS AVAILABLE ONLINE:
http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/about/where_set.html

REGISTER EARLY—SPACE IS LIMITED!

Hameau Farm & PA-WAGN PRESENT

**A TWO-DAY EQUIPMENT WORKSHOP
WITH NONE OTHER THAN SHANE LABRAKE
FOR YOUR DAUGHTER(S), AGES 12-15
July 19, 9:00 a.m. — July 20, 8:00 p.m.**

Give this workshop to a curious and adventuresome girl who wants/needs to know more about equipment maintenance & repair. Meals, lodging, fun evening activities, and tools are all provided for the bargain price of \$45 per participant. Directions and packing suggestions will be mailed at registration receipt.

REGISTRATION

Contact Audrey Gay Rodgers
Email: agrodgers@acsworld.net
Telephone: 717-667-3731

Or online at: <http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/RegisterHameau.html>

2005 James Farrah AWS/NWS

DO YOU HAVE E-NEWS SUBMISSIONS?
EMAIL YOUR FARM/COMMUNITY EVENTS,
CLASSIFIED ADDS,
AND ITEMS OF INTEREST TO lsmg@psu.edu
Frequent Enews Updates Available At:
http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/E_News.html

PA-WAGN & PASA
PRESENT

SOIL QUALITY WORKSHOP

GARGASZ FARM
VOLANT, PA (LAWRENCE COUNTY)
AUGUST 1, 2007
10:00 A.M.—3:00 P.M.

JOIN MARY BARBERCHECK & RON GARGASZ FOR A FARM TOUR TO LEARN ABOUT SOIL BIOLOGY AND FERTILITY, BENEFICIAL SOIL MICROORGANISMS, THE USE OF COVER CROPS, AND CROP ROTATION TO IMPROVE SOIL FERTILITY.

REGISTRATION FEE
\$ 15 (INCLUDES LUNCH)

REGISTER ONLINE:

<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Register9-6.html>

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP



PRESENTED BY PA-WAGN, PDA, &
PA LANDSCAPE & NURSERY
ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 8, 2007

HOSTED BY KIM BECHTLE
STILL POND NURSERY
EARLVILLE, PA (BERKS COUNTY)

GREENHOUSE GROWERS AND PA LANDSCAPE & NURSERY ASSOCIATION MEMBERS WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP. A PRESENTATION OF PDA RISK MANAGEMENT TOOLS IS INCLUDED.

REGISTRATION IS \$ 15

REGISTER ONLINE:

<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Register9-7.html>

JOIN PA-WAGN AT HAMEAU FARM IN BELLEVILLE, PA
FOR AN
FFA MIXER



SEPTEMBER 7
(TIME TBA)

HOST GAY ROGERS WILL GUIDE PARTICIPANTS TO A CENTRAL PA MILK MARKETING COOPERATIVE IN REEDSVILLE, PA FOR A TOUR OF A GOAT MILK PROCESSING PLANT. RETURNING TO HAMEAU FARM, PARTICIPANTS WILL ENJOY AN EVENING PICNIC AND MEET YOUNG WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE—THE FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA.

REGISTRATION FEE \$ 15

REGISTER ONLINE AT

<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Register9-8.html>

VISIT HAMEAU FARM ON THE WEB TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT FARM CAMP FOR GIRLS:

<http://www.hameaufarm.com>

DAIRY ALTERNATIVES FIELD DAY

YORK COUNTY

SEPTEMBER 26, 2007
10:00 A.M.

ARE YOU CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVES TO INCREASE YOUR FARM PROFIT? JOIN PA-WAGN AS WE TOUR YORK COUNTY FARMS WHO HAVE ALREADY MADE CHANGES IN THEIR FARM BUSINESSES, INCLUDING ADDING PASTURED MEATS, EGGS, AND ORGANIC VEGETABLES, OBTAINING A RAW MILK LICENSE, AND ADDING ON-FARM MILK BOTTLING.

REGISTRATION FEE \$ 15 (INCLUDES LUNCH)

REGISTER ONLINE AT:

<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Register9-9.html>

INCLUDING TOURS OF: STUMP ACRES,
PERRYDELL FARMS,
SWISSLAND ACRES, & SPOUTWOOD FARM

POULTRY PROCESSING WORKSHOP

BLAIR COUNTY

FRIENDS FARM
OCTOBER 16, 2007
9:00 A.M.—12:00 NOON

INTERESTED IN PROCESSING YOUR OWN POULTRY? JOIN CHRIS WISE AT FRIENDS FARM ON OCTOBER 16 FOR A HANDS-ON BUTCHERING SESSION. LEARN HOW TO PROCESS POULTRY HUMANELY, EFFICIENTLY, AND PROFITABLY.

REGISTRATION FEE \$ 15

REGISTER ONLINE AT:

<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Register9-10.html>

TO LEARN ABOUT ADDITIONAL ON-FARM EVENTS AT FRIENDS FARM, VISIT PA-WAGN'S E-NEWS AT:

http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/E_News.html

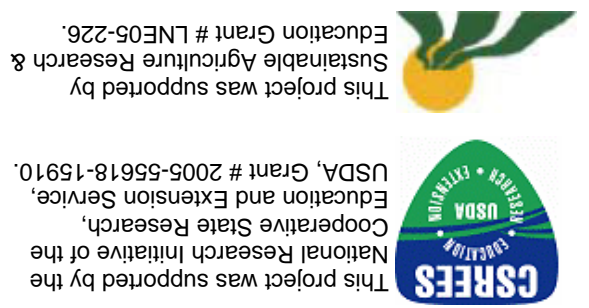
PENNSYLVANIA WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL NETWORK
THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
 302 Armsby Building
 University Park, Pennsylvania 16802

Official Business



The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke building, University Park, PA 16802-5901, Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY.

Visit PA-WAGN on the web:
<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu>



Become a PA-WAGN Member

Complete an Online Application at
<http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/join.html>

Send a blank email to:
pawagn-announce@lists.cas.psu.edu

SELF-SUBSCRIBE TO RECEIVE PA-WAGN ANNOUNCEMENTS AUTOMATICALLY