Summer 1998

Small Farm News

Small Farm Center • Cooperative Extension • University of California

Outreach Projects Span State

Radio stations, bus tours, and agritourism are just three vehicles that the Small Farm Program uses to reach small farmers throughout California. The following are snapshots of three outreach programs undertaken by the Small Farm Program.

Advisors Make Inroads On The Radio

In the late 1990s, radio certainly can't be called high-technology communication. But Small Farm Program farm advisors Manuel Jimenez and Richard Molinar have found that it's still one of the best ways to get information out to the people they serve.

As part of the Small Farm Program's outreach efforts, Jimenez and Molinar work with small-scale farmers in Tulare and Fresno counties, respectively, helping them sustain their small businesses with information on crop production, pest control, labor management, fertilization, harvesting, and marketing. They make personal visits to farms and answer questions on the telephone. While articles, newsletters, and even a site on the World Wide Web are part of their communication efforts, they say nothing works like radio.

Manuel Jimenez chats with co-host Stella Romo

Jimenez drives to Fresno once a month to answer listener questions on Stella Romo's live call-in talk show *Comentarios y Entrevistas* (Commentaries and Interviews) on KGST. On the program, he's known as "Señor Agrónomo," ("Mr. Agronomist") and he's considered an expert on everything agricultural.

Because of his success reaching Hispanic farmers on the radio, Jimenez is looking for more air time. He is now coordinating a new special program on *Radio Bilingüe*, a public radio station in Fresno that reaches small-scale farmers and farm workers throughout California, and in parts of Texas and Mexico.

While Jimenez directs his programs to Spanish speaking farmers, Molinar's radio service targets Fresno County's Hmong farming community. Every other Monday evening, his assistant Michael Yang, fluent in Hmong and Lao, can be heard on Fresno radio station KBIF 900 AM. The 30 minutes of air time is pur-

—Continued Page 4

Growing Red and White Currants

A crop insert from the Specialty and Minor Crops Handbook, Small Farm Center

Ribes rubrum, *Ribes sativum*, and *Ribes petraeum* are members of the *Saxifragaceae* (saxifrage) family.

Red and white currants are essentially the same fruit, differing only in color. Cultivars come from combinations of three main species of *Ribes*, all of them deciduous shrubs. *Ribes rubrum* is an upright shrub found from northern Europe to Siberia and Manchuria. *Ribes sativum* (*R. vulgare*), which includes the large-fruited Cherry cultivar, is a spreading shrub from the temperate region of western Europe. The vigorous *Ribes petraeum*, which includes the Prince Albert and Goudouin cultivars, is a native of high mountain areas of north Africa and Europe.

Flowers are borne toward the base of 1-year-old stems and on spurs on older stems. Each bud opens into a number of flowers that are joined together on a delicate, drooping stem called a *strig*. Most cultivars have self-fertile flowers, but a few are partially self-sterile.

Market Information

Use. When picked just after they turn red, red currants are unsurpassed for jelly

—Continued Page 5

In this Issue

Director's Message

El Niño and Other Disasters

One of Frank Sinatra's signature songs was "It Was A Very Good Year." This has not been a very good year for agriculture. I received word recently that both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate have zeroed out funding for the Fund for Rural America competitive grants program. This news puts the cap on a year of disasters for agriculture.

When the Federal Agriculture Improvement Act of 1990 was passed, it was with an implicit, if not an explicit, contract that Congress would appropriate $100 million per year for three years to fund research and technology transfer projects in areas that improved the competitiveness of U.S. agriculture, environmental stewardship, and rural communities. This was a trade-off for the withdrawal of government from commodity programs that stabilized prices and farm incomes.

Desmond Jolly

During its first year of operation, several million dollars were withdrawn from the Fund to meet disaster relief needs in the Midwest. This substantially diminished the resources available for the original purposes of the fund.

But if 1997 brought portents of disaster, 1998 has brought torrents. Bear in mind that the federal budget, for the first year in at least two decades, is running a surplus of from $40 - $50 billion. Bear in mind also that the day on which the Fund was being zeroed out, the President was signing the Congress' Highway Bill for $203 billion. According to a news item filed by Glen Johnson for the Associated Press, critics "... label the new law an election-year plum for Congress, saying it contains pork for all 50 states." Utah, which is hosting the 2002 Winter Olympics, gets $640 million.

And this was the year in which the National Commission on Small Farms advocated putting the small, family farm at the centerpiece of agricultural policy. It advocated research on new crops, improved farming and marketing systems, technology development and adoption for value-added products, entrepreneurship development, etc. The zeroing out of the Fund calls into question the government's commitment to meet the recommendations of the National Small Farm Commission.

But besides the political heavy weather, agriculture has been savaged by El Niño and, if we believe Vice President Gore, El Niño may become more the norm than the exception. El Niño plus global warming may precipitate an oscillation of climate between floods and drought. If this is the case, risk will increase manyfold for agricultural producers at the very time when the government is determined to privatize risks. The result, if we are unlucky, could be disastrous, as many producers do not have crop insurance and may not be able to cover credit obligations.

But at least with a $203 billion highway program, farmers may have less potholes to traverse as they take products to market.

Disaster Relief

Growers affected by El Niño might be eligible for the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. The program provides crop loss protection for many crops for which federal crop insurance is not available. Details include:

- Producers will be paid benefits similar to the catastrophic level of crop insurance (50 percent coverage, 60 percent price).
- An eligible disaster condition must have affected your area.
- Producers must file a report with the local FSA office within 15 days after crop damage is apparent. Call the local FSA office staff for more specifics about this requirement.
- After filing the initial report with FSA, producers have until July 15, 1999, to file a separate benefits application form with the local FSA office.

For more information, contact your local FSA office, listed in the U.S. Government section of your phone book.

program news

Visitors:

The Small Farm Center hosted a delegation from Indonesia with whom it shared experiences and information about prospects for the small farm sector of Indonesian agriculture.

The delegation included **Iwan Gunawan**, Ph.D., head, Sub Directorate of Technology for Terrestrial Based Natural Resources, Jakarta; **Mulyaeli Kusumowidagdo**, Ph.D., director, National Aeronautics and Space Institute Remote Sensing Technology Center; Jakarta; **Hedianto**, senior manager, Mitsubishi Corporation, Jakarta; and **A Karsidi**, director, BPP Teknologi, Jakarta. **Louis J. Armstrong** and **Philip Mineart** of Woodward-Clyde International-America, Oakland, also were members of the group, which expressed a desire to establish a working relationship with the Small Farm Program and UC Davis.

Steven Kirkhorn, M.D., Health Partners, St. Paul, Minnesota, visited the Small Farm Center to discuss farm work health-related risks and the Center's Pesticide Safety Outreach Program.

The Center also hosted a delegation from **Muldova** that is interested in small farm issues.

Conferences

Small Farm Program Director **Desmond Jolly** attended the May 19-22 National Conference on Agriculture and Rural Tourism in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

"**From Farm to Table: Animal Husbandry and Public Health**," a symposium held in Sacramento May 12, was designed to help people with opposing perspectives shift their focus from points of disagreement to areas of shared values. The symposium was sponsored by the Small Farm Center, the Davis Humanities Institute,the Sierra Health Foundation, the UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, and the California Council for the Humanities.

The San Diego Agricultural Conference held June 6 in Oceanside, California, provided participants with information to establish successful new farm businesses or to make transitions to new crops or new agricultural enterprises. The conference was sponsored by the Small Farm Center; UC Cooperative Extension, San Diego County; Mira Costa College; and the Carlsbad Agricultural Improvement Fund.

Awards

Michael Yang, right, with Fresno farmer Srun Phe.

Michael Yang, field and lab assistant, UC Cooperative Extension, Fresno County, received a Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources 1998 Individual Incentive Award. As Small Farm Program farm advisor Richard Molinar's assistant, Yang has demonstrated client trust, leadership, and creativity in his work primarily with Hmong and Lao farmers.

Of Hmong descent, Yang escaped from Laos to the U.S. with his family at the age of nine. His firsthand knowledge of Lao farming and culture has been instrumental in the development of Cooperative Extension outreach to the Southeast Asian community in Fresno.

Small Farm Center

SMALL FARM NEWS is published by the Small Farm Center, University of California, One Shields Ave., Davis, CA 95616-8699. Phone (530) 752-8136, fax (530) 752-7716; web site: http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu.

Director: Desmond Jolly, dajolly@ucdavis.edu
Secretary: Birgit Hempel, sfcenter@ucdavis.edu
Program Rep.: Shirley Humphrey, sahumphrey@ucdavis.edu
Newsletter Editor: Susan McCue, semccue@ucdavis.edu
Postgraduate Researcher: Angela Moskow, almoskow@ucdavis.edu
Admin. Assistant: Linda Vieira, lmvieira@ucdavis.edu
Student Interns: Mai Hoang, Mary O'Brien

The Small Farm Center links those who need information on small-scale farming with those who have the information. The Center produces publications and a newsletter; sponsors conferences and seminars; holds a library of periodicals, reports and books; gives referrals; and answers requests for information.

Readers are encouraged to send us information, express views, and contact us for assistance. Mention of a specific product is intended for the reader's information — not as a recommendation of that specific product.

Outreach Projects–*FROM PAGE 1*

chased by the Small Farm Program and the USDA's Farm Service Agency.

"Half of the material we present is from the Farm Service Agency, covering such issues as loans and the non-insurable crop program. The other half provides information we wish to extend to the farmers, on such topics as pesticide use and safety, nematode control, disease problems and effective cultural practices," Molinar said. Yang always reserves part of the program for call-in questions.

"When strawberries were ready, we got many calls," Yang said. "With the wet weather, people had problems with botrytis and rot. We explained about the products that help the problem and what they should be doing for the safety of workers and themselves."

Molinar and Yang have offered radio listeners free pH and salinity soil testing. A number of farmers have taken them up on the offer, including one who was wondering why he was having trouble getting anything to grow.

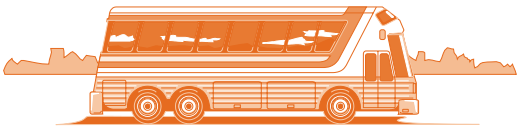
In this case and many others, radio has proved to be an effective way to reach small-scale farmers — many struggling unnecessarily with problems University research has already solved — and provide them practical information and counsel from the UC Small Farm Program advisors.

Multi-Agency Farm Tour

"Models for Success" farm tour, held for the first time on Feb. 24, 1998, used a unique approach to raise awareness among Spanish-speaking farmers about the services they can receive from agencies. A bus filled with tour participants, including 31 growers, visited three small farms and the Rural Development Center. Each site on the tour showcased a different agency, and participants were introduced to farmers already working with these agencies in areas including crop production, marketing, soil conservation, farm management, and financial assistance. The tour was conducted in Spanish, with simultaneous translation in English. At each site, the farmer and agency rep described what kinds of problems the agency had helped the farmer solve. "Growers light up when hearing from other growers, and they asked lots of questions," says Monterey County Cooperative Extension Director Sonya Varea-Hammond, who participanted in the tour.

The tour group also stopped at the Watsonville and Salinas Cooperative Extension offices. There the participants viewed a bilingual video on what Cooperative Extension does, heard from the agricultural commissioner, and picked up informational literature from the agencies involved.

The "Models for Success" tour is a project of the Joint Agencies Outreach



Committee, a voluntary group organized by Cooperative Extension that has been meeting since 1995. The tour was sponsored by Cooperative Extension in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties, the Small Farm Program, the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County, the Rural Development Center, and the California Latino Agricultural Association.

Two Small Farm Program farm advisors, Richard Smith, Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties, and Ramiro Lobo, San Diego County, participated in the tour. Ramiro Lobo helped evaluate the program's effectiveness by interviewing 15 growers who agreed that the tour was a productive use of their time. All of them said they would participate again.

Small Farm Center and Partners Launch Agri-Tourism Project

Agri-tourism is one alternative for improving the incomes and potential economic viability of small farms and rural communities. Some forms of agri-tourism enterprises are well developed in California — including fairs, festivals, etc. Other possibilities offer potential for development.

To aid in this development, the project "Adding Value to Agriculture — A Collaborative Approach Based on Agricultural Tourism," will allow those involved to develop organizations of growers, marketers, and community representatives to formulate visions, develop strategies, and begin to develop agri-tourism enterprises. These enterprises will add value to agriculture and rural products, and will create markets for them.

Funded by a grant from the USDA's Fund for Rural America, project principal investigators, collaborators, and cooperators include Desmond Jolly, director, Small Farm Program; Angela Moskow, postgraduate researcher, Small Farm Center; Diane Wallace, county director, UC Cooperative Extension, San Diego County; Ramiro Lobo, farm advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, San Diego County; Scott Parker, program representative, UC Cooperative Extension, San Diego County; Lourdes Gonzalez, president, California Latino Agricultural Association; Linda Harris, Cooperative Extension microbiologist, Department of Food Science and Technology, UC Davis; and Michael Dimock, principal, Sunflower Strategies, Sonoma.

Planned project activities include the development of a working group in agritourism, a resource center for information and literature, and county based workshops and meetings.

The project's advisory committee includes Vashek Cervinka, formerly with California Department of Food and Agriculture; Peter Graff, director, Center for International Trade, Gavilan College; Tom Lease, National Program Manager, California Trade and Commerce Agency's Division of Tourism; Paul Vossen, farm advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, Sonoma County; and Garth Veerkamp, farm advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, Placer-Nevada counties. ■

Red and White Currants–FROM PAGE 1

making. They are also used for pies and sauce (sometimes in combination with other fruit) and for wine. The crushed fruit makes a cool, refreshing summertime drink. Some currants can be eaten out of hand if left on the bush for about three weeks after the berries first turn red (red cultivars) or translucent (white cultivars). Currants are popular among northern Europeans. They are little known in America because they were banned by federal law in 1920 as a supposed carrier of white pine blister rust. The ban was lifted in 1966, and currants are now enjoying some renewed interest in the U.S.

Culture

Climatic requirements. Currants thrive in cool, well-drained fertile soil, in full sun or in partial shade. In warm regions, the bushes prefer heavy soil and should be planted in partial shade or on a north-facing slope. An organic mulch can be used to protect the roots and keep the soil cool and moist.

Propagation and care. Currants are propagated from hardwood cuttings of year-old wood. They usually are grown as bushes spaced 5 feet apart. To grow currants in tree form, remove all but the top three buds from the cutting so sprouts will not grow from below the ground. Set cuttings in the ground in the fall or early spring.

Annual pruning will increase yield and keep plants manageable and healthy. Prune so that most fruits will be borne on spurs of 2- and 3-year-old wood. To maintain a supply of two or three each of 1-, 2-, and 3-year-old stems, use a renewal method of pruning. In the first winter, remove all but two or three stems at ground level. The second winter, remove all but two or three of the stems that grew the previous season. At this point the bush will have two or three each of 1- and 2-year-old stems. Continue this practice every winter. In the fourth winter, cut away any stems more than 3 years old at their bases and shorten long or low-hanging branches.

Ripe red currents. Photo: Bernadine Strik

If you want to grow different cultivars in a small area or against a wall, you can grow currants in cordons as single stems. Plant cordons 1 1/2 feet apart or train them against the wall. To develop a cordon, shorten the single upright stem each winter to 6 inches of new growth and shorten any laterals.

Currants have a moderate need for nitrogen and a high potassium requirement. An annual dressing of 1/2 ounce of actual potassium per square yard will prevent potassium deficiency, which is visible as scorching of the leaf margin. Currants are sensitive to chloride ion toxicity, so muriate of potash (potassium chloride) should not be used.

Pests and diseases. Currants can be grown with little or no spraying. They may require treatments including spraying if pests such as aphids, spider mites, and currant borers cause damage. The imported currantworm, usually a gooseberry pest, can defoliate currant plants quickly. An appropriate insecticide should be applied as soon as currantworm is detected. By cleaning up leaves in autumn, you can help prevent potential disease. Fungicides can be used to control powdery mildew, leaf spot, and anthracnose.

Harvest the whole strig intact unless the fruit is to be used immediately. Ripe currants are very soft and easily injured.

Plant Sources

Note: Red Lake, Wilder, and Minnesota 71 are excellent cultivars and are widely available. Jonkheer van Tets and Cherry are resistant to powdery mildew. The following nurseries offer more extensive selections of cultivars:

Alexander Eppler Ltd., P.O. Box 16513, Seattle, WA 98116-0513.

International Ribes Association, c/o Anderson Valley Agricultural Institute, P.O. Box 130, Boonville, CA 95415.

Southmeadow Fruit Gardens, Lakeside, MI 49116.

Whitman Farms Nursery, 1420 Beaumont NW, Salem, OR 97304.

More Information

Antonelli, A., et al. 1988. *Small fruit pests — Biology, diagnosis, and management*. Publication BE 1388, Washington State University Agricultural Communications, Pullman, WA.

Baker, Harry. 1986. *The fruit garden displayed*. Cassell Ltd., The Royal Horticultural Society, London.

Galletta, G., and D. Himelrick, eds. 1990. *Small fruit crop management*. Prentice Hall Press, West Nyack, NY.

Ourecky, D. K. 1977. *Blackberries, currants, and gooseberries*. Cooperative Extension Publication IB 97. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

Reich, Lee. 1991. *Uncommon fruits worthy of attention: A gardener's guide*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Reading, MA.

Prepared by Lee Reich. ■

■ The *Specialty and Minor Crops Handbook* is available from the Small Farm Center. Please see our display on page 7 for pricing and ordering information.

Profile: Three California Farmers

Diverse Operations Fit Unique Farmers

by Susan McCue, publications coordinator, Small Farm Center

Tom Chino

Tom Chino owns a farm stand in Del Mar, San Diego County, that attracts wealthy clientele who flock to his stand in Mercedes coupes, Range Rovers, and chauffeur driven limousines. Restaurant chefs even lie about buying his multi-variety farm stand produce, says Chino. "Because our name has cache, people will say that they use our vegetables and they don't."

Although his farm stand is highly successful, Chino and his family have known their share of hardship. During World War II, his parents were interred in a relocation camp for Japanese Americans. Chino says the family farming operation started "around 1946, I guess. It took a while to get out of camp."

Advised by a veteran farmer to grow a variety of crops to protect against single crop failure and financial ruin, Chino's parents initially grew sweet corn and strawberries. But sweet corn requires more spraying than the family was comfortable with, so they branched out. Today their farm stand overflows with colorful vegetables in multiple varieties. Offerings include baby artichokes, beets, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, radishes, and scallions.

"Our clientele is somewhat sophisticated, well healed and well traveled, but they are also ethnically mixed because they are from other areas," says Chino, who explains that these factors keep him looking for vegetables from around the world. "This is cardoon," points out Chino. "We didn't have any idea how to grow it. We had to look in books." Chino continually refers to his home library for that purpose.

His diverse clientele allows him to introduce new produce and see if it sells before expanding his offerings. There have always been odd items that capture small segments, says Chino, but never any crop that dominates sales.

Chino markets his produce solely through the farm stand. "I don't think we ever went to farmers' markets because we can maintain our individuality here," he explains. The logistical efforts inherent in selling at farmers' markets also have kept his family on the farm, where they happily continue to sell quality vegetables to wave after wave of Mercedes, Range Rover, and limousine occupants.

Rare Fruit Grower Sells U-Pick

Up the road in Fallbrook, northern San Diego County, retired chemical engineer George Emerich sells rare exotic fruit to u-pick clientele who find his 5 1/2-acre hilltop residential lot strictly through word of mouth. On a recent visit, Emerich weaves his way through a United Nations-like assortment of trees that his predominantly Southeast Asian clients normally traverse as they pick his fruit.

As he walks, Emerich offers tastes of cherimoyas and white sapotes, and points out Indian and African Jujubes, Oriental persimmons, Surinam cherries, Algerian tangerines, Pakistan mulberries, and guavas from Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand. He explains that an international exchange has accidentally occurred between one of his Algerian tangerine trees and a blood orange tree, creating a new fruit that he has passed on to a UC researcher for further experiments.

Calling himself a hobby farmer, Emerich doesn't have a clear reason why he transitioned from engineering to rare fruit upon retiring. Maybe the answer is in his upbringing. He was born on a cattle ranch in Montana, and says, "I was a cowboy when I left for college a little over 60 years ago." He took the country with him throughout his engineering career, planting fruit trees at all of his homes. His love of fruit has extended to involvement in organizations including the California Rare Fruit Growers Association, where he has served for more than 20 years in positions including president and as a member of the board of directors.

Asked what he would do differently if he grew fruit strictly for profit, Emerich says he would have to increase the number of trees that grow fruit that customers actually want, and decrease the number of trees that bear undesirable fruit. He knows that growing for profit isn't easy, and that some crops don't do well no matter how hard you try. "You can't do a darn thing with mangos," he says, and points his finger at a nearby specimen.

George Emerich

"That one is 10 to 12 years old. In the tropics, a two- to three-year-old tree would be bigger than that."

Regardless of the effort, the 82-year-old Emerich stays committed to his trees. And don't even mention the idea of slowing down after retirement. "That's the problem with a lot of people," says Emerich. "They just sit down and die. I'm not quitting."

—CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Stockton Grower Transitions to Stay in Business

Quitting just isn't in Joann Cutter's vocabulary either. When she and her family realized that their 15-acre Countryside Farms just outside of Stockton couldn't compete with higher volume farms, they decided to make some changes. "This land's been in my family for 50 years," says Cutter. "I came back 10 years ago. Hard work was not a surprise. But the money that's needed was a shock."

So the Cutters are replacing 10 acres of vegetables to grow walnuts, a long term crop that they can manage while they work part-time. Because the walnut trees won't produce for five years, they plan to raise crops between the trees, and sell other farmers' walnuts until their trees produce. But the walnut planting isn't the only change the farm has seen.

"Our best money is in having field trips," explains Cutter, who offers educational tour packages to schools in the Stockton area. Her hands-on tours last for an hour to an hour and a half, with five tours scheduled per day throughout the spring, summer, and fall. Depending on the season, the trips include hayrides, petting animals, and climb-on farm tractors, as well as a behind the scenes look at the growing and packaging of the farm's fruit and vegetables.

Cutter also operates a farm stand where she sells strawberries, boysenberries, blackberries, and raspberries, which generate half her income. Her well-built, county approved stand also houses shelves of dill pickling cucumbers, hot salsa made from the farm's tomatoes and peppers, and her really big sellers — fruit jams.

A master at marketing through a variety of sources, Cutter also sells at farmers' markets, and occasionally to supermarkets. She also picks and delivers 90-100 crates and ships in the same day to a wholesaler's cold box in San Francisco. "When the fruit starts getting pink, I start calling contacts," say Cutter. Somehow she also manages to work off the farm part-time for San Joaquin County Cooperative Extension in Stockton.

But she notes, "I would not be able to farm if my son didn't help out." She also gets help from her husband, who travels full time as a trucker and works on the farm evenings and weekends. Seasonally employed workers also help out.

Joann Cutter

"My family farmed from the early 1900s," says Cutter, who clearly loves the land she inherited. "We don't farm just for the profit of it. We enjoy the process." As a tribute to her family, she plans to create "a cookbook with a picture of my father in it, and what this land means to us ... these 15 acres." ■

News Notes

According to the May 1998 issue of the Farm Service Agency Newsletter, California agriculture suffered $191.1 million in damages resulting from El Niño storms. Farmers in more than 36 counties have been affected, with damage and losses found in commodities including strawberries, wheat, alfalfa, broccoli, celery, almonds, and lettuce.

Richard Gradwohl, director of the International Miniature Cattle Breeders Society, says miniatures are better suited to 2-10 acre homestead farms because they are easier on the land, equipment, and facilities. He adds that smaller animals also need less feed, are less intimidating and easier to handle than larger animals, and have carcass weights that better match the proportion size and needs of today's smaller families.

Established by the 1996 Farm Bill, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) helps farmers, ranchers, and other landowners protect wildlife habitat. Participants prepare and implement a wildlife habitat development plan with assistance from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and their local conservation districts. WHIP provides cost-share assistance for up to 75 percent of the cost of instituting wildlife habitat practices. Cost-share payments of up to $10,000 are available for each WHIP agreement, which is in effect for a five to 10 year period. Contact your local USDA Service Center or NRCS office for more information.

The University of Vermont Cooperative Extension Women's Agricultural Network (WAgN), offers a series of educational programs for women who want to own farms and related businesses in Vermont. Although intended primarily for Vermont women, the programs are open to other women and men as well. Contact Women's Agricultural Network, 590 Main St., University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405-0059; (802) 656-3276 for more information.

Letter To the Editor

from Raoul Adamchak, CCOF member

Organic agriculture is not on the brink. While, as Desmond Jolly claims, "organic agriculture ... as practiced in the late 1960s and 1970s, could have been regarded as part of a fugitive subculture of urban refugees ...," it could also have been a rational response to widespread pesticide abuse, contamination of groundwater with chemical fertilizers, and a lack of fresh, healthy produce in the marketplace. The market for organic food continues to grow because agrichemical problems are still an issue and health and environment are increasing concerns.

Acronyms Explained

Readers shouldn't be put off by organic acronyms, particularly CCOF (California Certified Organic Farmers), OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute), and OFRF (Organic Farming Research Foundation). These organizations are evidence that the organic community is strong and active, and not on the verge of chaos. CCOF is a membership organization of roughly 700 farms and 50 handler/processors that has been working for 25 years in California and the nation to develop standards for organic agriculture that promote ecologically based farming, protect the environment, and provide consumers with a product they can believe in.

CCOF staff and members had a strong hand in writing the California Organic Food Act of 1990 (COFA 1990) and were consultants to the National Organic Standards Board. Asking whether the standards of CCOF and COFA 1990 are too high or too low misses the point: they are the standards needed to uphold the integrity of organic on the farm and for the consumer.

OMRI's function is to determine what brand name products can be used by certified organic growers and processors. The California Organic Foods Act of 1990 may allow fish emulsion, but OMRI looks at brands of fish emulsion and checks to see if any additives used are prohibited. No state or federal agency does this. OMRI is supported by most private certifiers throughout the country.

OFRF funds research related to organic farming and disseminates results to organic farmers and growers interested in adopting organic production systems. They also are active in educating the public and decision-makers about organic farming. OFRF has raised over $1,000,000 for organic research and information dissemination programs, and has awarded 74 on-farm research and education grants.

These are the private, non-profit groups that have nurtured and strengthened the organic industry and defined organic for much of the country.

Little credit for the continuing success of organic agriculture can go to another acronym, USDA. They have given almost no support to research or marketing of organic products. According to Mark Lipson, author of "Searching for the 'O-Word', Analyzing the USDA Current Research Information System for Pertinence to Organic Farming," organic research made up less than one-tenth of one percent of USDA's research portfolio, both numerically and fiscally.

USDA Rewrites Rules

The many weaknesses of USDA's proposed rules are further evidence of their lack of knowledge and commitment to the industry. USDA received 200,000 overwhelmingly negative responses to the proposed rules during the comment period — more opposition than they ever received for any proposed program. They will rewrite the Organic Rules (they have already backed down on sewage sludge, irradiation, and genetically engineered organisms), but the organic community still questions their expertise and support of organic agriculture.

Finally, the view that "oversight of organic operations by private certifiers is undermined by the presence and participation of organic producers and handlers within their governing bodies," (editor's note: this statement was made by Solomon Teklu, not Desmond Jolly) is an extreme minority view. Member-run organizations like CCOF and Oregon Tilth have established the strictest standards and insure that their growers adhere to them by inspecting all operations with a knowledge, experience and vigor that serves to maintain the integrity of organic. Retailers, wholesalers and consumers recognize that CCOF certified product provides them with the greatest safeguards against pesticide contamination and that certified farmers are using sustainable practices that protect the environment.

With the knowledge that USDA has not been supportive of organic agriculture, and is at best slow to act, private certifiers and other industry groups are now organizing to develop national standards — based on the NOSB recommendations — that can be implemented sooner rather than later. Given the strong record of the development of standards for organic agriculture by private certifiers, this may be the industry's best chance for strict, consistent national standards

Organic is Stronger

Organic agriculture is growing stronger and bigger, but it is not on the brink of bonanza boondoggle. It has a solid foundation of knowledge, experience, and leadership that will continue to preserve the integrity of organic product. Private certifiers are a significant part of the foundation that gives it its weight and strength. They will insure that national rules, whether private or legislated, are strict rules that provide the consumer with organic products that they trust and farms with guidelines for ecological practices that protect the environment. ■

Small Farm Program Publications

The Specialty and Minor Crops Handbook

Updated and expanded from the first edition, the *Specialty and Minor Crops Handbook* contains 63 crop profiles, a comprehensive bibliography, a glossary of Asian vegetables, and an index to common and scientific crop names.

To order, call the Small Farm Center at (530) 752-8136. Cost: $35 plus tax and shipping.

The Small Farm Handbook

This practical guide covers topics including livestock and crop production, buying property and equipment, dealing with taxes and regulations, and marketing.

To order the *Small Farm Handbook*, call the Small Farm Center at (530) 752-8136 Cost: $20 plus tax and shipping.

Resources

Publications

Voluntary Food Safety Guidelines for Fresh Produce explains practices for minimizing microbial contamination in fresh produce production, cooling, transporting, and processing. Cost: $35. Contact: Dylan Whitlow, Western Growers Association, PO Box 2130, Newport Beach, CA 92658; (714) 863-1000 x133.

Direct Marketing and Related Topics is a bibliography containing citations from 1991-1996 books, articles, and videocassettes on direct marketing and related topics. Cost: free. Contact: Mary Gold, National Agricultural Library, Room 304, Beltsville, MD 20705-2351; (301) 504-6559.

Mushrooms are detailed in three resources: the *How-To Book* (cost: $3.50), *Proceedings of the National Shiitake Mushrooms Symposium* (cost: $10), and the *Procedure for Growing Shiitake Mushrooms* video (cost: $5). Contact: Cathy Sabota, Alabama A&M University Cooperative Extension System, P.O. Box 967, Normal, AL 35762; (205) 851-5710.

The *California Poultry Letter* covers general poultry information including egg production and processing. Cost: $12 per year; free to qualified subscribers. Contact: Donald Bell, UC Cooperative Extension, 142 Highlander Hall, University of California, Riverside, CA 92521; (909) 787-4555.

Web Sites

USDA National Ag Statistics
http://www.usda.gov/nass/pubs/agstats.htm
Includes information on agricultural production, supplies, consumption, and costs.

Ornamental Horticulture Research and Information Center
http://ohric.ucdavis.edu
Research-based information and issues facing the horticulture industry in California.

Electronic Ag Decision Maker
http://www.econ.iastate.edu/adm/homepage.html
A financial decision making tool for farmers and others involved in agribusiness.

Herb Online
http://herbonline.com
Herbal recipes, remedies, and information.

The International Link
http://ctr.uvm.edu/trade
Worldwide links with information on areas including trade, market and agricultural research, and ag market prices.

Wright's PestLaw
http://www.pestlaw.com
News, regulatory information, and other resources about conventional pesticides, biopesticides, and antimicrobial pesticides.

■ Visit the Small Farm Center web site at **www.sfc.ucdavis.edu** for new web site links on topics ranging from crops to water management.

Keep your family, workers, and customers safe this summer by following these farm safety tips.

Think Safety First

Operating Vehicles

During 1981 - 1990, 417 people were killed while working in agriculture in California, with highway motor vehicle crashes the most common cause. Prevention is relatively simple:

- Always wear your seat belt, especially in pickups and larger trucks.
- Place children in a car seat in the back seat, or attach a seatbelt. If you drink alcohol or take prescription or nonprescription drugs, ride as a passenger.

Children

Children account for about 20 percent of all farm fatalities. The National Farm Medicine Center estimates the death toll in children younger than 20 years of age on U.S. farms and ranches at 300 each year. To safeguard your children:

- Provide good supervision. If hiring a sitter is impossible, work together with other families to care for children cooperatively.
- Do not allow children to ride on tractors, even in a parent's arms or on a lap. Never leave a running machine unattended.
- Keep pesticides, fuels, lubricants, soaps, disinfectants, solvents, and other chemicals in a locked storage facility.
- Never put any harmful materials into food containers.
- Fence ponds and other water areas.

Vehicle and Child-related safety tips by William E. Steinke, director, Farm Safety Program, UC Davis.

Food Safety

For best on-farm cleaning and sanitation, always clean and sanitize the inside, outside, lips, and handles of farm containers. Also keep in mind the following:

- Do not dry nesting containers on soil or other potentially contaminated surfaces.
- Do not stack or nest cleaned containers if they have been in connect with soil.
- Do not use harvest containers for postharvest shipping or transport of lightly processed or "value-added" produce without an intervening cleaning and sanitation.
- When possible, use containers in different colors for each application to minimize confusion as to prior on-farm use of a container.

Food safety tips prepared by Trevor Suslow, extension specialist, Department of Vegetable Crops, UC Davis.

Pesticide Safety

When working with pesticides, if you feel dizzy, sick, or have trouble breathing:

- Stop what you are doing immediately and follow the appropriate emergency first aid procedures listed on the pesticide label.
- If someone has swallowed a pesticide, never induce vomiting if the person is unconscious or having convulsions.
- Have someone call ahead to tell the doctor the brand name and common name of the pesticide, the EPA registration number, and the name of the manufacturer.
- If possible, take a copy of the pesticide label with you to the doctor.

Pesticide safety tips from "Pesticide Safety for Small Farms," available from the Small Farm Center. ■

calendar

JULY

11
Introduction to Wine Analysis
UC Davis
Designed primarily for home winemakers, but useful for cellar workers also, this class introduces wine analysis for basic wine production and builds familiarity with basic tests.
Contact: Sharon Munowitch, University Extension, University of California, One Shields Ave., Davis, CA 95616; (800) 757-8777.

12-15
Annual Society of Horticulture Conference
Charlotte, NC
Topics include horticulture in cancer research, virtual horticulture, and links between molecular and horticultural processes.
Contact: Teresa Alfaro, American Society for Horticultural Science, 600 Cameron St., Alexandria, VA 22314-2562; (703) 836-4606.

16
42nd Annual Weed Day
UC Davis
Learn about current weed research at UC Davis through a bus tour of field demonstrations and current research studies, followed by indoor presentations.
Contact: David Visher, Weed Research and Information Center, University of California, One Shields Ave., Davis, CA 95616; (530) 752-0612.

19-22
4th Annual Conference on Precision Agriculture
St. Paul, MN
Presented by the University of Minnesota's Precision Agriculture Center in cooperation with the Potash and Phosphate Institute, the program includes hands-on workshops, industry forums, and exhibits.
Contact: Mary Kay Ferguson, University of Minnesota Extension Service, P.O. Box 64780, St. Paul, MN 55164-0780; (800) 367-5363.

19
Mulching Green Waste in Tree Crops
San Luis Obispo, CA
Presented by Ben Faber, UC Cooperative Extension farm advisor, who specializes in avocados, subtropical crops, soils, and water.
Contact: Laura Gardner, San Luis Obispo Agricultural Weights and Measures Department, 2156 Sierra Way, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405, (805) 781-5910.

25
Small Vineyard Series: Integrated Pest Management, Cover Crops and Erosion Control
UC Davis
For home and small commercial wine growers, the course covers important diseases and insect pests of grapevines, with special attention to problems encountered by small producers.
Contact: Sharon Munowitch, University Extension, University of California, One Shields Ave., Davis, CA 95616; (800) 757-8777.

AUGUST

14-16
Introduction to Permaculture
Middletown, CA
Learn more about permaculture, the art and science that applies patterns in nature to the design and construction of human and natural environments. This workshop focuses on home food production, energy efficiency, and erosion control.
Contact: Larry Santoyo, Santoyo & Associates Permaculture Services, 309 Cedar St. #85, Santa Cruz, CA 95060; (800) 469-5857.

SEPTEMBER

16
Efficient Use Of Organic Fertilizers For Vegetable Production
Buellton, CA
This field day is sponsored by the Organic Farming Research Foundation, Nojoqui Farms, and UC Cooperative Extension, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.
Contact: Mark Gaskell, UC Cooperative Extension, Santa Maria; 624 W. Foster Rd., Santa Maria, CA 93455; (805) 934-6240.

13-15
Health and Safety in Western Agriculture: Building Bridges
UC Davis
Presented by the UC Agricultural Health and Safety Center, topics include increasing communication, collaboration and cooperation, heightening community and industry awareness, and sharing the latest research findings in agricultural health and safety.
Contact: Eleanor Wood, UC Agricultural Health and Safety Center, ITEH Bldg, Old Davis Road, Davis, CA 95616-8757; (530) 752-5253.

15-17
Fresh-Cut Products: Maintaining Quality and Safety
UC Davis
This three day workshop focuses on production, processing, packaging, and quality control of fresh-cut products.
Contact: Anna Trunnell, University Extension, University of California, One Shields Ave., Davis, CA 95616; (800) 757-8777.

16-18
Best of the West Summit
San Francisco, CA
Participants from the western states are invited to address prominent issues impacting urban and community forestry. Several success stories will be presented that exemplify leadership, innovation, and practical solutions for serious urban forestry challenges.
Contact: Martha Ozonoff, Dept. of Environmental Horticulture, University of California, One Shields Ave., Davis, CA 95616; (530) 752-7636.

Summer Recipes

Easy No-Cook Tomato Sauce

1 lb. (3 to 4 medium) fresh California tomatoes, coarsely chopped
1 Tbs. olive oil
3/4 tsp. each salt and sugar
1/2 tsp. ground pepper
1 1/2 to 2 tsp. balsamic vinegar

In a food processor or blender, combine and process all ingredients to make a rough-textured sauce. Adjust flavors to taste. Makes about 1 1/2 cups sauce. Variations:

Monday: add 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
Tuesday: add 1/4 cup chopped Greek or Italian olives and 1 1/2 tsp. finely grated orange peel
Wednesday: add 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese and 3/4 tsp. finely chopped fresh or dried rosemary
Thursday: add 3 Tbs. toasted peanuts and 4 to 6 thin slices prosciutto, cut into bits
Friday: add 3 Tbs. capers and 2 Tbs. chopped parsley

From the California Tomato Commission web site at www.tomato.org/tips-pgs/sauce.htm

Bistro Pear Tart

1/4 cup cornstarch
1/2 cup sugar
2 cups nonfat milk
1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
1/4 teaspoon orange or almond extract
1 baked 9-inch tart shell
fresh California Bartlett pears, pared and sliced
1/4 cup apricot jam

Mix cornstarch and sugar; whisk in eggs. Scald milk; slowly whisk hot milk into egg mixture; return to heat. Stir while cooking until thickened. Stir in peel and extract; cool. Pour into baked tart shell. Arrange sliced pears on top; brush with warm apricot jam. Makes 10 servings.

Note: For a quicker and lower- fat tart, use a nonfat vanilla pudding mix instead of the custard.

From the California Pears web site at www.calpear.com./recipes.htm

Small Farm Center
University of California
One Shields Avenue
Davis, CA 95616-8699

Official Business
610W

Address Services Requested

Bulk Rate
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Davis, CA
Permit No. G-00268