



New Sea Grant Aquaculture Expert Highlights Marketing

by Irene Miles

SPRING 2006

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Seafood seems to be going the way of many other industries in the U.S. In the past decade, the rate of imports has steadily increased. In fact, in 2004, imports made up 80 percent of the U.S. seafood market.

Due to this trend, aquaculture producers in Illinois and Indiana need to find new ways to turn a profit as they bring their fish to market, according to Kwamena Quagraine, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant's new aquaculture marketing specialist. "Imported seafood is typically priced lower than these producers can compete with."

He offers several suggestions. "Imported fish is usually shipped fresh or frozen, so ethnic markets that sell live fish offer a niche for local producers," said Quagraine. "Another approach is to add value to the product. For example, producers can get an advantage in the market by partnering with processors to produce ready-to-serve products for the food service industry." Quagraine says producers should think about making money from more than just producing the fish.

Quagraine, who is also funded through Purdue University Extension and University of Illinois Extension, comes to the Sea Grant program from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, where he was an assistant professor of aquaculture marketing for four years. Originally from Ghana, he received his doctorate in agricultural economics from the University of Alberta in Canada.

With his focus on marketing, Quagraine will be working with the aquaculture industries, aquaculture producers, aquaculture associations, distributors, restaurants, retail out-

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The fish cages are submerged into large bodies of water such as lakes and large deep ponds. They cannot be used in shallow ponds.





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College of Agricultural,
Consumer and
Environmental Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

If you would like to receive future issues of Agro-Ecology News and Perspectives, contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant (217-968-5512; cvnghgrn@uiuc.edu).

Acrobat PDF files of this and past issues are available at <http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/asap/news/newsersp.html>.

New Sea Grant Aquaculture (continued)

lets, and consumers to develop viable markets for Indiana and Illinois farm-raised aquaculture products. First and foremost, he will provide assistance to aquaculture producers in pursuing and realizing economic and market development opportunities. "My approach is to provide information to producers on how to be successful in today's market and how to keep their production costs competitive," said Quagraine.

Quagraine is positioned at Purdue University in West Lafayette in the Department of Agricultural Economics and the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources. He is beginning to plan aquaculture marketing workshops in several counties in Indiana to reach local producers. "I look forward down the road to bringing these workshops to Illinois counties as well," he added.

Quagraine is also an author. *The Aquaculture Marketing Handbook*, co-authored by Carole Engle of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, has recently been released through Blackwell Publishing. The 288-page book provides a broad base of information on aquaculture economics, markets, and marketing. For more information, visit www.blackwellpublishing.com.

For more information about aquaculture marketing in Illinois and Indiana contact Quagraine at (765-494-4200; or kquagrai@purdue.edu).



The stocking rates depend on the species and system of production since each has a different production cycle. Indoor systems tend to stock high compared to outdoor ponds like these. Survival depends on management and the species. For example, freshwater prawns are carnivores so if stock high, they eat each other and you will end up with nothing. With good management, we should be able to get as high as 80-90% survival.



Asian markets offer an opportunity for aquaculture producers to sell live fish locally. Some of the major species raised are Sunfish/Bluegill, Bass (hybrid striped bass), Tilapia, Yellow perch, and some ornamental fish.

The Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant College Program is one of more than 30 National Sea Grant College Programs. Created by Congress in 1966, Sea Grant combines university, government, business and industry expertise to address coastal and Great Lakes needs. Funding is provided by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U. S. Department of Commerce, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Purdue University at West Lafayette, Indiana. Irene Miles is a media/communications specialist for Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant.

Organic Research at the U of I

Researchers at the University of Illinois and their non-university partners are pursuing answers to questions about organic and sustainable agriculture—with “sustainable” practices being defined as socially supportive, commercially competitive, and environmentally sound.

All aspects of production practices and cropping-system management suitable for organic and sustainable agriculture are being studied. The research considers disease, weed and pest control measures, nutrient management, livestock husbandry, and the influence of organic and alternative practices on soil and water quality and greenhouse gas emissions.

Scientists from the Illinois Natural History Survey and the U of I are working, with the advice of experienced organic farmers, on the Windsor Organic Research Trial. The study investigates transition paths and their influences on crops, insects, weeds, disease, and soil ecology. The trial will be certified organic in 2006.

Researchers are also studying the social and economic dimensions of organic and sustainable agriculture. They address, among other things, community issues, marketing and consumer behavior, regulatory policies, and conservation programs.
Making Connections

The Illinois Organic Production Conference, now an annual event, was developed by the Illinois Organic Task Force (of U of I Extension) in response to the demand for useful information on producing organically (www.aces.uiuc.edu/asap/orgconf/).

Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program summer field tours let participants gain practical knowledge from successful farmers and other food entrepreneurs, in real farm settings (www.aces.uiuc.edu/asap/).

The New Agriculture Network is a collaborative project of the University of Illinois and Michigan State, Purdue, and Iowa State universities and organic growers in these states to facilitate information exchange between researchers and growers (www.ipm.msu.edu/new-ag.htm).

Farm Beginnings is an educational training program designed for new and established farmers interested in learning how to farm sustainably (www.farmbeginnings.uiuc.edu).

Students can pursue related undergraduate and graduate studies in all departments in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences at the U of I; they can participate in classes during spring and fall semesters or in research and farming efforts in the summer.



Michelle Wander addresses a group about soil stewardship on a tour of the Windsor Organic Research Trial. Wander is an associate professor of soil fertility and director of the U of I Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program.

continued on next page



What Can the U of I Do For You?

Extension and outreach staff at the U of I can help you find out more about a myriad of topics:

- ✦ Growing plants and raising animals using organic and sustainable methods
- ✦ Weed, insect, and disease diagnosis and control, as well as management of soil nutrients, plants, and animals
- ✦ Reducing the “environmental footprint” of growing/gardening operations
- ✦ Minimizing the negative effects of growing plants and raising animals on air and water quality
- ✦ The economics of organic and sustainable practices
- ✦ How organic and fresh foods can enhance health
- ✦ Where to buy organic and fresh local produce
- ✦ How agricultural practices influence the environment
- ✦ Who to contact for additional information on certification or find suitable inputs

Organic Illinois

At present there are about 200 certified organic producers in Illinois. Most have small farms and cater to Illinois consumers through direct marketing. Larger farm acreages, historically devoted to cash grains, are increasingly serving organic markets for specialty grains and are reintegrating livestock into their systems. Illinois farmers presently supply only a fraction of the local demand for organic and/or sustainably grown food. Increased access to technical information and suitable processing and distribution channels are needed to help this sector grow.



The Windsor Organic Research Trial at the U of I will be certified organic this year.

What It Takes

To be “organic,” farmers comply with USDA’s National Organic Program guidelines, and government-approved certifiers inspect farms where organic food is grown to make sure farmers are following all the rules. Companies that handle or process organic food, before it gets to a local supermarket or restaurant, must be certified too. Farms that do not comply with the full set of organic standards, including certification when sales exceed \$5,000, are not organic and can be fined if they present themselves as such. Farms using natural or sustainable techniques may or may not be using methods consistent with organic principles. Many smaller farms that market directly to consumers use their personal interactions, instead of certification, to educate their customers about their production practices and product quality.

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2006 Sustainable Agriculture

The Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program at the University of Illinois promotes research and provides outreach opportunities regarding a wide spectrum of alternative farming practices as well as ways to provide adequate and dependable farm income. This diversity of topics is well represented by the six sustainable agriculture tours for 2006.

"These tours provide a rare opportunity for a behind-the-scenes look at Illinois farms and businesses that approach sustainable agriculture creatively," said Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant, University of Illinois research specialist who coordinates the tours.

"The owners are passionate about what they do, and that passion really comes across on their faces as they talk to visitors. But they are also quick to share the pros and cons of their operation—the joys and frustrations of trying to run a certified organic farm, for example," she said. Cavanaugh-Grant said that this is the fourth year she has coordinated the tours.

The first tour, on May 4, will be to Oak Hills Organics (www.oakgroveorganics.com) in Carthage. The farm and dairy are owned by Tony and Sheila Huls, who raise cows for both grass-fed organic beef and for dairy—naturally, without the use of antibiotics, genetically modified organisms, or added growth hormones.

On June 5 there will be a tour to Heartland Meats (www.heartlandmeats.com) in Mendota, a farm and business owned by John and Pat Sondergoth. The company specializes in Piedmontese beef that is free of added growth hormones.

The third tour will visit Aqua Ranch in Flanagan on July 12. Aqua Ranch Industries (www.aquaranch.com) supplies tanks and tank/pool liners for the growing aquaculture industry and helps develop "aquaponics" systems that yield both fish and culinary herbs in a controlled environment.

On August 9, tour participants will visit the Green Earth Institute in Naperville, owned and operated by Steve Tiwald. Green Earth Institute (www.greenearthinstitute.org) is a nonprofit organization established in 2002 to promote nutritional health and environmental sustainability.

On September 13, a tour will be given of Prairie Fruits Farm in Champaign owned by Leslie Cooperband and Wes Jarrell. Jarrell and Cooperband planted over 300 fruit trees and several hundred berry bushes in 2004 on three and a half acres. Their land is in transition to organic, and is eligible for organic certification this year. Cooperband and Jarrell also have a grade A goat dairy and Illinois' first farmstead cheese making facility. They will provide a tour and information about their orchard, the goat dairy and goat cheese processing. Deirdre Birmingham, network coordinator for the Upper Midwest Organic Tree Fruit Growers Network (www.moses-organic.org/treefruit/intro.htm) will be there to contribute information about organic tree fruit production on the tour. The network is a project of the Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) and a co-sponsor of the tour.

2006

Participants gather for instructions before being divided into small groups to tour several stops at the Windsor Organic Research Trial on one of the 2005 sustainable agriculture tours.

culture Tours Scheduled



Bill Wilson assists during a talk on the basic premises of permaculture during a 2005 tour to Stelle.



One stop on a 2005 tour was to the Stelle telephone company, which is run on solar power.

The final tour of the season, on October 5, will stop at several places in southern Illinois: Blue Sky Winery in Makanda, Darn Hot Peppers in Cobden, and Great Boars of Fire in Anna. At the winery (www.blueskyvineyard.com), visitors will walk through the vineyards for a close look at the trellising systems that are used and can participate in a tasting of some of the wine varieties. Darn Hot Peppers (www.darnhotpeppers.com/) boasts growing healthy and flavorful specialty hot peppers, using environmentally safe and pesticide free products while employing natural, time honored aspects of traditional farming. Great Boars of Fire (www.greatboarsoffire.com/) is a lodge and fully mobile catering service that specializes in pulled barbecued pork.

A fee of \$20 per person, which includes lunch, will be charged for each tour. Registration at least one week in advance is required. For more details about the tours, including maps and agendas, or to register, visit www.aces.uiuc.edu/asap/topics/tours.html or contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant (217-968-5512; cvnghgrn@uiuc.edu).

The tours are sponsored by the Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences at the University of Illinois, University of Illinois Extension, the North Central

Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Professional Development Program, the Illinois Small Farm Task Force and by the Agriculture Tourism Partners of Illinois (www.agritourismillinois.com). 



Stan Schutte with MOSES executive director Faye Jones; MOSES Board Member and 2003 Organic Farmer of the Year Award winner Linda Halley; and with George Bird of the Rodale Institute. Stan is holding a replica of the \$500 check that comes with the award. Stan plans to donate his monetary award to the Central Illinois Farm Beginnings Program.

Stan Schutte Named Organic Farmer of the Year

by Jody Padgham, MOSES education director

The board of directors of the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) has awarded the 2006 Farmer of the Year designation to Stan Schutte of Triple "S" Farms, Stewardson, Illinois.

Schutte owns and manages a diversified organic farm of more than 200 acres, producing dozens of varieties of organic fruits and vegetables along with drug-free free-range poultry and beef. He also grows organic dent corn, sweet corn, popcorn, food and feed grade soybeans, and hard red wheat. He employs six to eight people in the peak of the season, and 100 percent of his income comes from his farm.

Schutte attributes most of his weed management success to using cover crops in the rotation. He tills for several flushes of weeds prior to planting. His five-year crop rotation is wheat underseeded with red clover followed by clover, followed by clover, followed by corn (seeded down to rye or oats over winter), followed by soybeans. The red clover provides a nitrogen plowdown. The rye or oats are disked in prior to seeding soybeans, protecting the soil from erosion, providing green manure crops, and enhancing soil fertility. For Schutte, red clover has proven to provide the healthiest stand with the greatest soil benefit.

For pest and disease management, Schutte has done a lot of on-farm research and variety trials to determine which breeds will best serve his operation. He rotates his animals through his organic paddocks, starting with beef cattle, followed by sheep, hogs, chickens, and ducks. This system utilizes available nutrition, returns nutrients to the soil, and promotes productivity from the forage mixes. Long periods of rest between livestock rotations break the life cycles of any pests deposited on pastures and allow the forage to return to full stand.

Innovative marketing is Schutte's strong suit. He sells directly to consumers at several farmers markets and has created the Triple "S" Farms buying club. For a modest deposit and monthly subscription price, members receive a box of meat and poultry products in one of three sizes. He is currently developing "cow shares," which will allow interested customers to be cooperative owners of a dairy cow that Schutte will care for and milk, then distribute frozen organic milk to the owners. He has been working with University of Illinois Extension to determine the feasibility of a multi-species, value-added processing plant.

Water has been an especially important indicator of the changes in Schutte's farm resources. The increase in soil organic matter under organic practices has vastly increased the water-retaining capacity of his fields. He attributes much of this improvement to his cover-cropping practices. He also has planted buffer strips and fallow land to native prairie. He has seen an explosion in the wildlife on his farm.

Schutte will be the first to claim that he is shy about public speaking, but he has become an educator in many different Illinois forums. He speaks very matter-of-factly about what he does and why. He understands the skepticism of conventional farmers, having been one himself, which allows him to address their concerns with credibility.

Although Schutte first joined the Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) in 1997, he has been certified by OCIA Illinois Chapter #1 since 2002. The chapter declined from more than 150 members in the late 1990s to just 15 in 2002, when Schutte was elected president. His goal was to revitalize the chapter, and it now has more than 75 members. Schutte thinks OCIA serves small and medium-sized producers very well. He serves as an inspiration and resource for aspiring organic farmers, particularly through the Central Illinois Farm Beginnings program, which provides classes and internships for people who wish to become sustainable farmers.

Schutte feels that part of his success has been "leading by example." He also says that "nothing is truly sustainable if you can't pass it on," so farm succession is a major concern. He is delighted that his son has begun his own organic farming ventures at the home farm while obtaining his college degree. With his son involved, Stan says "farming has become fun again." 🌱

About the Award

The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service honors an outstanding organic farmer each year at the Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, with its award titled "MOSES Organic Farmer of the Year: An Organic Farmer Practicing Outstanding Land Stewardship."

There are four criteria for the award

1. Innovations in organic farming/livestock management, including crops and crop rotations, weed, pest and disease management strategies, sustainable or renewable energy, and marketing
2. Excellence in enhancing farm resources: soil, water, wildlife and biodiversity
3. Inspiration and education of organic farmers, consumers and others in the organic community.
4. Current organic certification

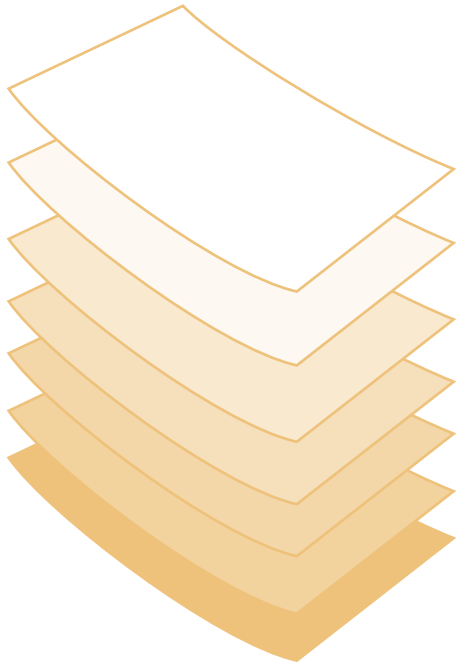
The winner receives a plaque; a \$500 cash gift; free registration, food and lodging at the Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference; and a \$100 gift certificate for the conference book sales booth.

Previous winners have been:

- Carmen and Sally Fernholz, A Frame Farm, Madison, Minnesota (2005)
- Martin and Atina Diffley, Gardens of Eagan, Eagan, Minnesota (2004)
- Linda Halley and Richard deWilde, Harmony Valley Farm, Viroqua, Wisconsin (2003)

Nominations may be made by anyone. For more information, visit www.mosesorganic.org. 🌱

SWCS Call for Papers



The 2006 workshop being organized by the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) is themed “Managing Agricultural Landscapes for Environmental Quality, Strengthening the Science Base” and will be held on October 11 to 13 at the Westin Crown Center Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri. The deadline for submitting abstracts of oral or poster presentations is June 1. Abstracts can be submitted at www.swcs.org/en/swcs_international_conferences/managing_agricultural_landscapes/.

The workshop seeks to gather information on what we know and what we need to know about the environmental effectiveness of conservation practices on agricultural land on a landscape or watershed scale rather than field by field or farm by farm.

The workshop is part of ongoing activities organized by SWCS in support of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Conservation Effects Assessment Project.

Concurrent, poster, and plenary sessions will be organized around four key workshop topics. Concurrent sessions will be designed to facilitate multidisciplinary content and discussion, and session co-chairs will write a synthesis of the presentations and discussion. Papers will be commissioned for presentation during the plenary sessions, and respondents will be identified to stimulate discussion among participants.

Evening roundtables will foster dialogue among workshop participants and plenary presenters on the four key workshop topics:

What should we measure, and how, to account for environmental effects?
Abstracts in this category address indicators and methods to detect, simulate, or monitor the effects of conservation efforts at landscape and watershed scales.


Methods for environmental management research at landscape and/or watershed scales. Abstracts explore approaches to conducting research at landscape and watershed scales.

Targeting within landscapes and/or watersheds to improve conservation effectiveness. Abstracts discuss approaches to identifying and targeting conservation efforts at sensitive portions of agricultural landscapes and/or particular management decisions by producers.

Realistic expectations for measurable change in environmental quality. Abstracts examine questions regarding geographic scale and the period of time over which environmental effects of conservation practices are likely to be detected.

Important dates:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| June 1 | Deadline for submission of oral and poster paper abstracts. |
| July 1 | Notification of acceptance or rejection of oral and poster paper abstracts. |
| July 15 | Deadline for oral and poster paper presenters to indicate intent to participate. |
| August 1 | Deadline for submission of final oral and poster paper abstracts. |

For more information, contact Max Schnepf (515-289-2331, ext. 15; max.schnepf@swcs.org). 

Dudley Smith Initiative Announces Grant

by Theresa Miller

Teachers and students in central Illinois will have an opportunity to learn more about sustainable agriculture because of programs funded by the Dudley Smith Initiative.

A teacher training program for elementary school teachers in Christian, Shelby, Montgomery and Fayette Counties will raise awareness of the agricultural system and its impact on the community. Named "TCEP," for Teacher Classroom Education Project, the program will encompass a three-day program for elementary school teachers to tour the Dudley Smith Farm in Pana, Watershed Park in Springfield, and learn about available resources in sustainable agriculture for their classroom. The program is scheduled for June 20 to 22.

Sixth grade students in Chris Baugher's science class at Litchfield Middle School will learn about the importance of carbon sequestration in agriculture. The development of the lesson will be funded through a grant funded by the Dudley Smith Initiative announced earlier this year.

The unit on carbon sequestration will introduce students to the importance of carbon release on agriculture, and farming methods employed to reduce carbon release such as no-till and crop rotation. Students will be asked to develop a project on cause of carbon release or benefits of set-aside ground for wildlife.


And seventh grade art students will learn important tasks of field identification of weed and plant species.

The students in Marsha DeWilde's art class will learn about the area weeds and plants specific to central Illinois, and impacts of devastation. They will then go to the Dudley Smith Farm in Pana to learn how to identify weed species through illustration, digital photography, measurement and sampling. A total of 50 students will be involved in the program that will commence in the fall of 2006.

"Through the program, students will become more familiar with agriculture in our area, and will learn the importance of the contribution farms located here make to the larger community and state," said DeWilde.

"We are pleased to offer these educational grants to help further agricultural awareness of the children in the area surrounding the Dudley Smith Farm," said Mary Ann Lila, interim associate dean, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois. "These grants further the mission set forth by Dudley Smith to rural community impact of agriculture on this Central Illinois area."

The Dudley Smith Farm is a working farm operated by the University of Illinois designed as an innovative research center focused on economic, environmental and social relationships to agriculture. A landowner with family roots in Christian County, Dudley Smith, Jr. donated the farm to this use in order to address the long-term stewardship and sustainability of agricultural practices. The initiative funds innovative and collaborative research efforts, as well as education grants for local elementary and secondary schools to learn more about sustainable agriculture.

Grants totaling \$7,300.00 were offered to five schools in the Christian County area. For more information, visit www.aces.uiuc.edu/DSI. 

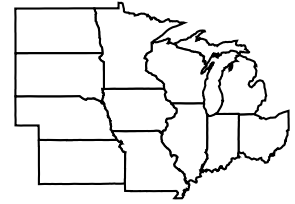
Theresa Miller is a media/communications specialist in the College of ACES at the University of Illinois.



Bar Tracy

Weed scientist Adam Davis and postdoctoral associate Ian Renne collecting data on weed biomass from winter cropland apasture in November 2005 at the Dudley Smith Farm in Pana.

North Central Region



SARE

University of Minnesota Named Host of NCR-SARE Program

The University of Minnesota has been selected to begin hosting the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (NCR-SARE) as it nears its 20th year of activity. The program has been housed at the University of Nebraska since its inception, and some operations will remain there for a few years. Bill Wilcke will continue to coordinate the program and to serve as a University of Minnesota faculty member. After the transition is complete, all staff will be employed by or work under contract with the University of Minnesota. One of Wilcke's goals is to make the transition as seamless as possible so that grant recipients and others contacting NCR-SARE don't need to be concerned about the office location.

The Administrative Council decided in the spring of 2005 to put hosting the program up for bid. "It was prompted when the issue was raised regarding having the coordinator at one location and the office in another," said NCR-SARE administrative council chair

Liz Maynard. "[We] tried for a couple years to have the coordinator at a different location, but it was a difficult thing to do. The main thing was the disconnect between where the coordinator was located and where the host institution was located."


"University of Minnesota administrators were very supportive of submitting a proposal to host NCR-SARE if I was willing to serve as the regional coordinator," said Wilcke. "It's kind of a package deal. The program will be housed in my department and in my building at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul."

"The University of Nebraska has been very gracious letting us try to have the coordinator at a separate location," said Jill Auburn, national SARE director.

The administrative council established a search committee to issue the call for bids in summer 2005 and to review proposals in the fall. The finalist was invited to make an oral presentation at

the council's fall meeting. Many of the University of Minnesota's attributes were outlined by Wilcke at that meeting, including the Twin Cities' role as a transportation hub, Minnesota's diverse agricultural background, a large work force, and an active sustainable agriculture community. Wilcke also cited the opportunity to retain a more unified staff when the program operates from the same location as the regional coordinator.

Wilcke will spend a year working at 100% capacity for NCR-SARE and then will return to his dual roles with SARE and the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

For more information, contact NCR-SARE (1-800-529-1342; ncrsare@unl.edu) or visit www.sare.org/ncrsare. 



Walter's Council Committee Term Ends

Gerry Walter's day job is as an academic advisor in the College of ACES at U of I. For the past four years, he has also served as Illinois representative to the NCR-SARE Administrative Council. Some of his responsibilities have been to attend meetings and contribute to the decision-making process about the distribution of funds for grant proposals. "I can't say that I had never read a grant proposal before," said Walters, "but I had never read this large a quantity of proposals and in so many different disciplines. That has been a challenge."

Since joining the committee, Walter has been involved with revamping the grant calendars to make them more friendly to farmers so that the money came at the right time. "We hope we fixed that. We also have worked to time our business meetings at the council so we could make decisions on grants and accommodate farmers' needs." Walter also has served on the council's graduate student grant program committee. "We have to think about the future and plan for it, and these graduate students are going to be the next generation of scientists in the field." Walter said that one of the most satisfying parts of being on the council was getting to meet new people, see what they are doing and being a part of that work. 🍷

Local Food Directory Online

ATTRA, the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, has assembled an online database of local food directories useful for producers and consumers alike. The Local Food Directory Resource, at www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/localfood_dir.php, includes national, regional, state and community directory resources for all 50 states, searchable by state.

For example, click on the state of Illinois and these listings are displayed:

Illinois Fresh

Guide to u-pick farms, roadside markets and farmers' markets, from University of Illinois Extension. Includes southwest Michigan and northwest Indiana. www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/fresh/

Illinois Farm Direct

A farmer-to-consumer directory of locally produced and locally sold foods, searchable by commodity and radius from a zip code. Contains 600 growers and processors and 200 farmers markets. www.illinoisfarmdirect.org/

MarketMaker (University of Illinois)

An interactive mapping system that locates businesses and markets of agricultural products in Illinois, providing an important link between producers and consumers. The online database can be searched by the type of market sought or by the type of business, whether producer, processor, wholesaler, retailer, or farmers' market. www.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/

Illinois Markets Information System: Food and Agribusiness Guide

An online listing from the Illinois Department of Agriculture, searchable by category, of companies that produce, process, package, or are headquartered in Illinois. www.agr.state.il.us/markets/mis/

Prairie Bounty of Illinois


(Illinois Specialty Growers Association)

A marketing directory for Illinois growers of certain specialty crops, including fruits, vegetables, herbs, and Christmas trees, searchable online by county and type of crop. The directory contains the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of Illinois producers who market through pick-your-own, cut-your-own, and roadside markets and who sell wholesale. Farm community market locations are also listed. Printed copies are available through the Illinois Farm Bureau for the cost of postage. www.specialtygrowers.org/bounty.htm

FamilyFarmed.org

A list of midwestern organic producers by state links to online profiles of each operation, with interviews of the producers that describe their production methods and the products they offer. CSA operations for the region are also listed.

<http://www.familyfarmed.org>

To add a listing, contact Tracy Mumma (tracym@ncat.org). 

Sign up for The Food Project's e-BLAST newsletter

BLAST (Building Local Agricultural Systems Today) is the national program of The Food Project. Each e-BLAST focuses on food, land, and youth and contains opportunities related to these through sustainable agriculture and food system work. To sign up for e-BLAST, send an email to blast@thefoodproject.org with your name, organization, address, phone number, and email address. Each e-newsletter, sent out every six weeks, contains information on sustainable agriculture, conference opportunities for youth and young adults, job and internship openings, funding opportunities, and more.

To learn more about BLAST, visit <http://www.thefoodproject.org/blast/>

CALENDAR

April 21–22

Shirk Center and the Center for Natural Science Bloomington–Normal, Illinois

The Illinois Sustainable Living Fair and the Illinois Wesleyan Wellness Fair are merging to create The Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo. This event is the collaboration of the Ecology Action Center and the Illinois Wesleyan University Wellness Program, both of Bloomington–Normal, and the Center for Sustainable Community of Stelle. For more information, visit www.islwe.org/.

May 6–9

All Things Organic Conference and Trade Show McCormick Place Chicago, Illinois

The conference will feature many organic exhibitors and be an opportunity to learn about new products, faces, trends, and companies and to make new contacts with established companies. For conference information, visit www.organicexpo.com/.

In conjunction with the conference, the Organic Trade Association in partnership with the National Association of State Organic Programs will host the North American Summit on Organic Production and Marketing. The summit will provide a collaborative forum for legislators, regulators, and industry members from Canada, the United States, and Mexico to establish contacts and create networks. (All attendees registered with a conference and trade show pass may attend any summit sessions.) For more information, visit www.organicexpo.com/summit.shtml.

June 13

Western Illinois Grazing Conference Macomb, Illinois

For information, contact Ken Nimrick at Western Illinois University (309-298-1288).

June 26–30

4th International Conference on Environmental Management for Sustainable Universities University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point Stevens Point, Wisconsin

This international conference is hosted by the Global Environmental Management Education Center, a center within the College of Natural Resources at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point. Building on the work of earlier conferences, participants will focus on transforming ideas into action and building sustainable communities beyond university campuses. The conference is targeted for a broad audience from university, business, government, and non-government organizations. For more information, visit www.uwsp.edu/cnr/gem/emsu/Home.htm.

July 20–22

Grazing America: The American Grassfed Association's Annual Conference Colorado Springs, Colorado

Details were not available at the time of publication. Information will be posted at www.americangrassfed.org/index.html.

August 15–17

2006 Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) National Conference Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

"A Midwest Homecoming: Sharing a New Tradition of Sustainability" is the theme of the 2006 biennial USDA/SARE national conference. This 4th SARE national/regional gathering draws university research and extension staff, farmers, ranchers, youth/students, agribusiness representatives, policymakers at all levels of government, and nongovernmental organizations to explore current issues in sustainable agriculture.

The conference will feature oral presentations, poster sessions, workshops, roundtable discussions, and tours designed to recognize and advance sustainable agriculture throughout the nation. For more information, visit www.sare2006.org.



2006 SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE TOURS

Mark your calendar and plan to attend one or more of this year's sustainable agriculture tours, highlighting the diversity and creativity of Illinois entrepreneurs.

A fee of \$20 per person, which includes lunch, will be charged for each tour. Registration at least one week in advance is required. For more details about the tours, including maps and agendas, or to register, visit www.aces.uiuc.edu/asap/topics/tours.html or contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant (217-968-5512; cvnghgrn@uiuc.edu).

May 4

Organic Beef & Dairy

Oak Hills Organics

Carthage, Illinois

www.oakgroveorganics.com

June 5

Better Beef, Naturally

Heartland Meats

Mendota

www.heartlandmeats.com

July 12

Making a Splash in Aquaculture

AquaRanch

Flanagan

www.aquaranch.com

August 9

Nutrition & Sustainability 101

Green Earth Institute

Naperville

www.greenearthinstitute.org

September 13

Goat Cheese and Fruit Trees

Prairie Fruits Farm and the Upper Midwest Organic

Tree Fruit Growers Network

Champaign

www.mosesorganic.org/treefruit/intro.htm

October 5


Wine, Peppers & BBQ

Blue Sky Winery (Makanda), Darn Hot Peppers

(Cobden) and Great Boars of Fire (Anna)

www.blueskyvineyard.com

www.darnhotpeppers.com

www.greatboarsoffire.com 

AGRO-ECOLOGY 

News and Perspectives

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