

AMERICAN Farmland

THE MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST



Farmers' Markets Are Opening

Help Us Spread the "No Farms No Food" Message!

Farms that grow fresh and healthy food for our farmers' markets are disappearing because many are in the path of development—in fact, every hour of every day we're losing 125 acres of farmland. This farmers' market season, you can do something about it! Spread the "No Farms No Food" message every time you shop at your local farmers' market by bringing your American Farmland Trust "No Farms No Food" tote bag.



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Make a donation of \$35 or more to AFT from now through May 31st by visiting www.farmland.org/totebag, and we'll send you the "No Farms No Food" reusable tote bag. Your donation will support our work to save farms and farmland that bring local foods to farmers' markets, restaurants and grocers. Get yours today! You may also donate by calling **1-800-431-1499**. Please be sure to mention this ad to get your "No Farms No Food" tote bag.





10 Consumer interest in local foods is surging.



17 AFT helps communities support local food.

Features

- 10 **FRESH FROM THE FARM NEXT DOOR**
A growing hunger for farm-fresh food is driving the burgeoning local foods movement.
 BY LAURA TEN EYCK

CENTER INSERT **AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST 2007 ANNUAL REPORT**

- 17 **WITHOUT LOCAL FARMLAND, IT'S NOT LOCAL FOOD**
AFT is working to bridge the gap between the farm gate and the dinner plate.
 BY JULIA FREEDGOOD

- 19 **A 'MAJOR' OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG FARMERS**
The next generation of organic farmers—and local food growers—is learning their craft through a new program at Washington State University.
 BY CAROL MILANO



AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Note from the Editor

AFT members received this issue of *American Farmland* by mail with AFT's annual report inside. If you obtained this issue of the magazine by another means, the annual report may not be included. However, you may view the annual report online at www.farmland.org or request a printed copy by calling (800) 431-1499.

Departments

FROM THE PRESIDENT	2
LETTERS	3
AROUND THE COUNTRY	4
INSIDE AFT	8
ESSAY	21
DONORS	22
FARM FRESH RECIPE	24

ON THE COVER: Picking green beans in South Egremont, Massachusetts, at Indian Line Farm, one of the first community-supported agriculture (CSA) farms in America.

PHOTO BY JASON HOUSTON

"THE FINEST GROWTH that farmland can produce is a careful farmer," the great poet and Kentucky farmer Wendell Berry once wrote. It's a line that makes me think fondly of Norm Berg, AFT's longtime friend and advisor who passed away in March, a few days after his 90TH birthday. Norm, who grew up on a small Minnesota farm during the Great Depression, dedicated his career to teaching farmers and ranchers how to be careful stewards of the nation's soil and other natural resources.

Norm's work did not end there. He made it his mission to remind all of us—farmers and non-farmers alike—about our shared responsibility to protect the agricultural land we all depend on for local food, clean water, wildlife and so much more. We will miss Norm greatly. He was a mentor and friend to everyone at AFT from the early days of the organization, and he continued to bless us with his unrivaled knowledge about conservation until shortly before he died. If you would like to read more about Norm's legacy or leave a remembrance about Norm, please visit our Web site at www.farmland.org.

Now that spring is here, I hope you are enjoying the greening of the landscape and the blossoming of long dormant plants. It's a good time to visit your local farm or farmers' market to truly experience the bounty that our nation's farmers and ranchers provide.



I will miss greatly the experiences I've had and friends I've made while serving this wonderful organization as president for nearly 23 years.

As our thoughts turn to renewal and growth, I have another important announcement to share with you. I will be stepping down as AFT's president later this year, so that my wife Judy and I can spend more time on our family's farm in California. This is a bittersweet time for me. I am looking forward to returning to the family farm, but I will miss greatly the experiences I've had and friends I've made while serving this wonderful organization as president for nearly 23 years.

The year ahead will be an exciting time for AFT. The organization is on the verge of launching a bold new strategic plan for the future—one that builds on our farm policy campaign successes and is based on our 27 years of experience working at the intersection of agriculture, the environment and local communities. I will stay involved with AFT to maintain our momentum on key programs and to ensure a smooth transition of leadership.

You'll hear much more about our exciting new initiatives in the months to come. Until then, please enjoy the spring and don't forget to appreciate the bounty of your local farms and ranches! Thanks for all that you do to support America's farm and ranch land.

RALPH GROSSI
PRESIDENT

AMERICAN FARMLAND

is published four times a year by American Farmland Trust, a nonprofit membership organization founded in 1980 to protect the nation's agricultural resources. AFT works to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment.

Basic annual membership dues are \$25. Membership benefits include a year's subscription to the award-winning magazine, *American Farmland*, and a 10-percent discount on all AFT publications and merchandise. Membership contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

AFT occasionally exchanges its membership mailing list with others. If you wish to be excluded from such exchanges, call Member Services at (800) 431-1499. A copy of AFT's most recent financial report can be obtained by writing to American Farmland Trust, 1200 18th St. NW, Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Web site: www.farmland.org

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Amazing Array of Agriculture in America

RECENTLY MY FAMILY drove from Wisconsin to Key West, Florida, for a vacation. I was amazed by the varied agricultural landscape we saw. I had never seen cotton growing before and saw fields and fields of it in Georgia. The Pecan groves were beautiful even though they were barren. We saw sweet corn being hand-picked in Florida and green tomatoes ripening in the southern sun. The orange groves were most impressive. I also was amazed by the number of beef cattle and tropical plant nurseries in Florida. My eyes were surely opened by the experience as were those of my children. I would recommend driving over flying any day. It was a great learning event for the whole family.

— MERRIE SCHAMBERGER
OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN

Water Shortages Affecting Florida Farmers

I AM DEEPLY INTERESTED in the future of America's farm and ranch lands. As a native of Pennsylvania and with good friends from Minnesota, I know the value and importance of protecting America's farmlands. I now live in central Florida, and have many friends that depend on farming for a living. Among these are Cuban families, who have a farm in south central Florida. Their biggest problem is water supply. The Okeechobee is their main source of irrigation, and the lake is drying up, having lost miles of shoreline in recent years. These people depend on the lake for their livelihood.

Florida, albeit an oasis for sun-worshippers and tourists, is a leading agricultural state and supplies the entire nation with fruits and vegetables grown only in Florida.

Water is the most precious resource we have in this entire country, and if we don't use conservation practices to preserve our resources they will soon be gone, perhaps in less than a century. We need legislation to protect the farmers and ranchers so they can continue to provide the nation with these vital foods, so necessary to preserve our way of life.

— KENNETH TITUS
COCOA, FLORIDA

If you submit a letter or photograph that we publish on this page, we'll send you AFT's stuffed cow. Kids, you can send farm-related letters, photographs or drawings too! Don't forget to include your name, address and telephone number.



VIEW FROM THE FIELD



Wildflower season peaks this spring on Steve Sinton's ranch in San Luis Obispo County, California. Sinton received AFT's Steward of the Land Award in 2005 for his leadership in conservation.

AMERICAN FARMLAND welcomes letters and feedback from readers. Please send your comments, stories or personal reflections on farm life to Kirsten Ferguson, Editor, American Farmland Trust, 1200 18th St. NW, Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20036, or email kferguson@farmland.org.



Around the Country

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 4 Washington | 6 Massachusetts |
| 4 Ohio | 7 New York |
| 5 North Carolina | 7 California |
| 6 Connecticut | |

Ecosystem Bill Passes in Washington Legislature

IN MARCH, WASHINGTON STATE passed an AFT-supported bill that will result in new ecosystem services markets for farm and forest landowners. Signed into law by Governor Christine Gregoire, the bill (SB 6805) will contract a study of private farm and forest-based conservation markets and then support a pilot project to prove their feasibility. Ecosystem services markets allow farmers and forest landowners to “sell” environmental services much like they sell agricultural products. Efforts are underway across the country to establish voluntary markets that would allow farmers and ranchers to sell everything from water quality credits to carbon credits.



AFT's Don Stuart with Washington Governor Christine Gregoire

AFT led a broad coalition in support of the bill, which was backed enthusiastically by many farm groups—including the Farm Bureau,

Dairy Federation, Cattlemen's Association, Forest Protection Association and the Grange—as well as environmental groups. The bill passed unanimously through both legislative houses and retained its funding despite a very tight budget.

(See Don Stuart's essay on page 21 for more information on ecosystem services markets or visit www.farmland.org.)

Help AFT Spread the “No Farms No Food” Message!



More than a million “No Farms No Food” bumper stickers have been distributed across the country and around the world. Have you spotted one? And now that our “No Farms No Food” tote bags are being sent out by the thousands, you're sure to see one of those soon. Help us spread the message online at our new “No Farms No Food” Flickr group.

Here's how you can get involved:

1. Join our group on Flickr at www.flickr.com/groups/nofarmsnofood.
2. Take a picture of the “No Farms No Food” message wherever you see it. Upload the picture to your account, tag it with “No Farms No Food” and submit it to the group.
3. Tell a friend and help us spread the word! Visit us online at www.nofarmsnofood.org.

Voters May Have Say on Important Bill for Ohio Farms and Environment

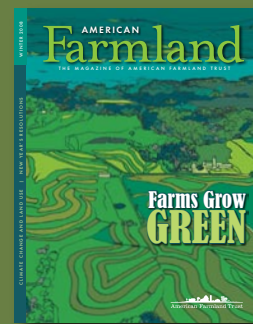
OHIO FARMERS MAY have access to more agricultural easement money than they expected come November. That's when voters may get a chance to weigh-in on a \$400 million expansion of the Clean Ohio Bond Fund, which includes farmland protection. The Ohio House and Senate are expected to pass legislation putting Clean Ohio on the November ballot.

The bond program began in 2000 after 57 percent of Ohio voters approved \$400 million in bonds, spread over eight years, to clean up urban brownfields, preserve green-space and farmland, and build recreational trails. So far, 86 of Ohio's 88 counties have benefited from the funding, and while 24,000 acres of farmland have been preserved, demand for agricultural easements far exceeds the available funding. A survey by The Nature Conservancy has shown strong support for Clean Ohio among likely Ohio voters. AFT is part of a coalition of environmental and agricultural groups actively promoting Clean Ohio.

North Carolina to Award \$8 Million for Farmland Preservation

TWENTY-ONE YEARS after the adoption of farmland preservation legislation in North Carolina, farmers and conservationists in the state are finally seeing results. Although the North Carolina Agricultural

AFT regrets that we did not recognize the key support of the Farm Foundation in helping us launch our work in the field of ecosystem services, as featured in the cover story, "Farms Grow Green," in the winter 2008 issue of American Farmland. The Farm Foundation provided seed funding for a summer 2007 listening session on carbon credit trading for Iowa farmers as well as four additional events. These activities have been critical to the development of AFT's new campaign for agriculture and the environment. Please look for an item on the Farm Foundation's vision for U.S. agriculture in our summer issue. For more information on Farm Foundation programs, visit www.farmfoundation.org.



Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund was established by the state in 1985, it received only \$2.4 million in its first 21 years. That changed in 2007, when a large groundswell of support for farmland protection in North Carolina resulted in an allocation of eight million dollars to the fund.

After the announcement last winter of North Carolina's first major cycle for farmland preservation funding, 53 local governments

FARM FACT

The prestige of farmers is on the rise. The annual Harris Poll measures public perceptions of 23 professions and occupations. In 2006, the profession that saw the biggest increase in prestige was that of farmers, who rose five points.



Wells Branch Farm in Snow Camp, North Carolina. Alamance County has applied to the state's Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to protect the farm.

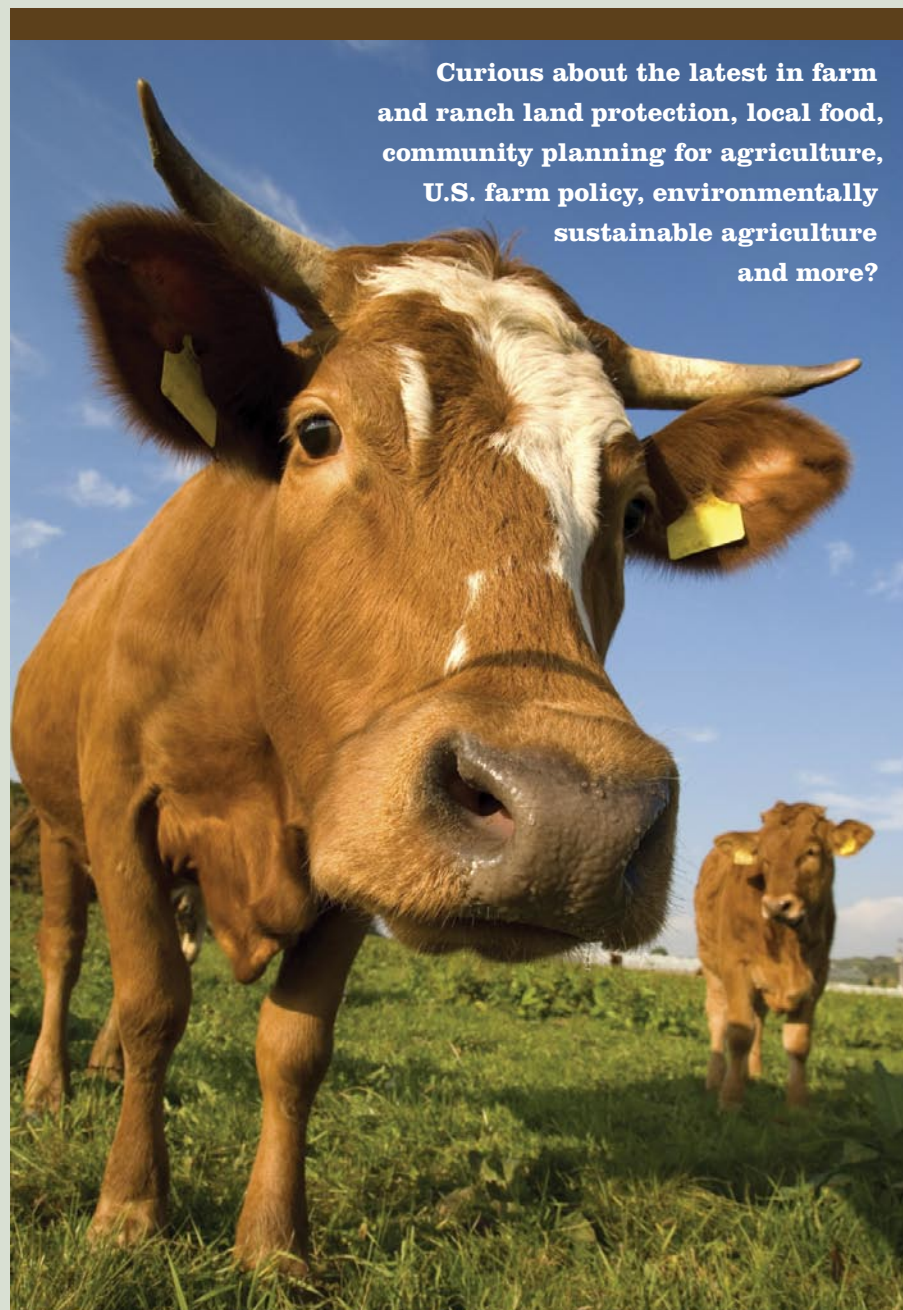
and non-profit conservation organizations submitted proposals. The requests ranged from support for local farmland preservation plans to a regional effort to strengthen planning and protect land near North Carolina's military bases. Land trusts and soil and water conservation districts submitted proposals to protect individual farms. Non-profit organizations are seeking help to identify new farmers and assist in the transition of farms to the next generation. And local governments have applied for funding to develop a value-added processing facility.

Grant recipients will be announced in June. For more information, contact AFT's Gerry Cohn at (919) 732-7885 or gcohn@farmland.org.

AFT Brings “No Farms No Food” Message to New England Ag Day Celebrations

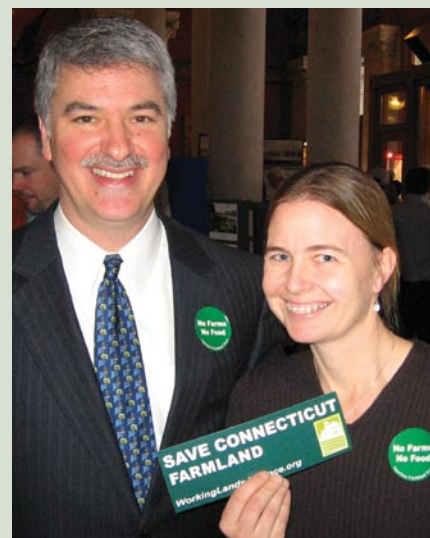
AFT’S “NO FARMS No Food” lapel stickers were in strong

demand at the Connecticut state capitol and at the Massachusetts state house in March. Offered to participants at “Agriculture Day” celebrations in both states, the stick-



**You should be receiving AFT’s monthly E-newsletters!
Visit www.farmland.org to sign up and learn more.**


American Farmland Trust



AFT’s Jiff Martin with Connecticut State Senator Donald Williams

ers and their slogan resonated with farmers, agriculture advocates and state legislators.

In Connecticut, one of the legislature’s leading farmland protection advocates, Senator and President pro tempore Donald Williams, discussed the current legislative session with Jiff Martin, AFT’s field representative and Working Lands Alliance (WLA) project director. WLA’s legislative priorities for the year include a transferable conservation tax credit and the creation of a new program to protect small and locally significant farms.

In Massachusetts, AFT’s New England director Cris Coffin and project specialist Ben Bowell emphasized to legislators the importance of enacting an environmental bond this session to provide continued funding for the commonwealth’s Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program as well as for farm viability, farm energy, farm-to-school and conservation cost-share initiatives. Bond-funded programs represent about 25 percent of the total annual budget of the state’s department of agricultural resources.

New York Conference Shows Farm and Community Leaders How to Take Action

AFT's *Growing New York Farms* conference in February educated more than 200 people from 45 New York counties about how to take action locally to protect farmland and promote the business of agriculture. Participants at the Saratoga Springs,

New York, conference included town officials, county extension educators, county planners and non-profit leaders. "There is incredible interest in protecting agriculture in our communities," said David Haight, AFT's New York director. "This conference demonstrates the tremendous enthusiasm for farmland conservation efforts in New York."



(top left) Suzie Seymour and Jean Parenteau of the Watershed Agricultural Council in Walton, New York; (top right) Derek Grout of Golden Harvest Orchards in Valatie, New York; (bottom, left to right) AFT's Jen Small with Meegen Finnegan and Teri Placek of the Agricultural Stewardship Association in Washington County, New York



Report Sees Future for Santa Barbara County Farms and Ranches

California's Santa Barbara County is known not just for its dramatic coastline and mountain ranges, but also for its expansive but threatened grazing lands and for its high value wine industry. In total, the value of the county's agricultural production topped \$1 billion in 2006. AFT's recently completed report, *Santa Barbara County Agricultural Resources Environmental/Economic Assessment*, assessed the economic and environmental benefits provided by county agriculture and the prospects for its future. "There are opportunities for agriculture to thrive in Santa Barbara, but they're dependent on farm-friendly land use policies that support retail and value-added agriculture, keep land available and affordable for farming and ranching, and offset the high costs of labor and labor housing," says Julia Freedgood, AFT's director of technical assistance services. To view the report, visit www.farmlandinfo.org.

Final Stretch for the Farm Bill

BY JIMMY DAUKAS, DIRECTOR OF AFT'S
FARM POLICY CAMPAIGN

NEARLY FOUR MONTHS of gridlock have stalled and threatened to halt the 2008 Farm Bill. As this magazine went to press, conferees from the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate had just met for the first time, giving us hope for a bill. However, major issues still remain. For the latest update, go to www.farmland.org/farmpolicy.

At the center of the debate are disputes among the House, Senate and White House—and even between committees in the Senate. House and Senate leadership have agreed to a \$10 billion over baseline, 10-year package, but disagreement over disaster programs and nutrition spending remain key sticking points. Perhaps most contentious is funding, which brings the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance committees into the picture. They disagree on where to find funding and which committee should have jurisdiction over how it's spent.

Finally, the White House has said it will veto any bill that is more than \$6 billion over baseline unless funding from approved sources can be found and the bill contains some reform of commodity subsidies.

Whether improvements to the farm bill are adopted this year is yet to be determined, but it is certain that the farm bill debate has fundamentally shifted. There is now enormous pressure for change from the public, from many leaders within the agriculture community and from lawmakers themselves—all looking to make farm and food policy relevant and effective in a changing marketplace.

Much of the current stalemate is due to traditional farm bill forces



that are unwilling to compromise in this new environment. But it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the growing consensus for a new direction in farm and food policy. New advocates and new alliances are bringing about positive new outcomes. The latest farm bill proposals from the House and Senate include important gains for conservation, farmland protection, local and healthy foods and subsidy reform.

American Farmland Trust, with your support, has advanced many innovative and forward thinking proposals that are close to adoption. Our ideas for improving conservation will help farmers get the support—both technical and financial—that they need to protect our water and environment. Changes to the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program will allow for better delivery, flexibility and the protection of more farm and ranch land for future generations. Renewable energy proposals will support environmentally responsible home-grown energy, rural development and new economic opportunities for farmers and ranchers.

Perhaps one of the most significant outcomes could be the Average Crop Revenue Extension Program (ACRE), which saves taxpayer dollars while providing a better safety net for farm-

ers who face increased risk in a rapidly changing marketplace. ACRE would fundamentally reform how subsidies operate, and it lays the groundwork for greater reform in the future.

Some of the changes are systemic—new programs and policies that will continue to shape farm policy for decades. Others are programmatic, giving immediate support to those who need it now. But none of these changes are set in stone. Congress needs to pass a farm bill with the programs that America needs most, and we must continue to build on the improvements to have long-term success.

Changing course is never an easy task, but the coordination of shared goals among nutrition, public health, conservation and local food groups has given us a louder and stronger voice. Many more opportunities to advance improved farm and food policy will arise in the near future, including climate change legislation, the Child Nutrition Act and the transportation bill, which influences land use decisions. By working together, we'll continue to have success in changing the political landscape by creating policies that help more farmers, ranchers and communities; protect the environment; and are a more efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

AFT Honors the Memory of Colleague and Mentor Norm Berg

AFT's longtime senior advisor Norm Berg, whose conservation achievements were featured in the fall 2007 issue of *American Farmland*, passed away in March at the age of 90. Shortly after his retirement as chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service in 1982, Berg joined AFT as a senior advisor. He continued to advise AFT until shortly before his death.

"It is rare in life that one gets to work with a true pioneer in agricultural conservation, and who at 90 felt so passionate about the importance of our nation's natural resources that he commuted an hour and a half to downtown Washington, D.C., to continue writing and developing policies in this area," said AFT's president Ralph Grossi.

Having witnessed the Dust Bowl first hand, Berg provided a crucial link to the beginnings of agricultural conservation in the United States. He worked for the first chief of the Soil Conservation Service, Hugh Hammond Bennett, who was considered the "father of soil conservation." Berg then rose steadily through the USDA ranks until serving as chief of the Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service) from 1979 to 1982.

"Norm was this tireless advocate for conservation because he saw, before many people, that sprawl and development were a serious threat to our nation's agricultural resources," Grossi said. "One key achievement was his drafting of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act, which gave greater authority over natural resources to the USDA. It required the agency to write a national conservation plan for Congress."

Unfortunately, the bill was seen as a national land-use law and was vetoed by President Ford. Later, President Carter asked for the bill to be reintroduced, and it was quickly signed into law. That led to the USDA's connection of commodity programs to conservation goals for the first time.

As chief of the Soil Conservation Service, Berg supervised the first National Agricultural Lands Study, which provided documentation of the extent and causes of farmland loss in the United States. As a result, the



1981 Farm Bill authorized farmland protection efforts by the USDA and established AFT's Farmland Information Center.

"Norm once said that although he came from a farm background, he learned early that urban dwellers have a great impact on the land and a great deal at stake with what happens in rural America," Grossi said. "He had a very real understanding of people and politics, along with an encyclopedic technical knowledge that he brought to AFT and all the organizations he worked with.

He was so gracious about sharing his knowledge of conservation—putting issues into perspective and helping us avoid critical missteps along the way."

Berg joined the staff of AFT in 1982, two years after the organization's inception. Concurrently, he served as the Washington representative of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS), of which he was a charter member and fellow. Berg also was a long-time member of the Anne Arundel County Soil and Water Conservation District. The USDA acknowledged his enduring influence in 1998 by naming him Chief Emeritus and offering him a permanent office at NRCS headquarters.

Berg was born in Iowa but raised on a family farm in Pine County, Minnesota. He received his bachelor's of science from the University of Minnesota and a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University. He served in the U.S. Marines during World War II. A devoted husband and father, Berg was predeceased by his wife Ruth, and he is survived by four daughters, five grandsons and granddaughters, and four great-grandchildren.

Recently, AFT—with the help of NRCS, SWCS, the Anne Arundel Soil Conservation District and Berg's friends and colleagues—established the Norm Berg Special Collection, an online archive of speeches and writings by and about Berg, as well as key laws and reports that represent milestones in agricultural conservation. The archive can be found at www.farmlandinfo.org.

Please share your accolades and memories of Norm Berg at the online condolence book that has been established on AFT's Web site at www.farmland.org/NormBerg.

ORGANIC FOODS

SWEET CORN

FRESH *from the* FARM NEXT DOOR

A growing hunger for farm-fresh food is driving the burgeoning local foods movement.

BY LAURA TEN EYCK

No longer strictly the domain of gourmet food lovers, the trend of eating local has surged into the mainstream in recent years. Unprecedented numbers of consumers are returning to their hunter-gatherer roots, flocking to farmers' markets and farm stands and buying into "CSA" farms. They are seeking out everything from locally produced beef and salad greens to staple items like flour and butter.

Whether the shoppers are concerned moms, young couples striving to eat food grown within 100 miles of their homes, or seniors harkening back to the days of home-grown food, people have started going straight to the source to put food on their tables. As farmers are in the fields sowing this year's crops, many in the local foods movement are looking to the future and wondering what's next.

In the past, our nation's colossal, centralized food system has made it harder than it should be for consumers to buy local, but that is starting to change. "The local foods movement is shaking up our perception of what is 'normal' when it comes to food," says Vermont author



CSA farms like this one sell "shares" of their weekly harvest.

Bill McKibben, whose latest book *Deep Economy* makes the case for why local communities should produce more of their own food. "Suddenly we're questioning whether we really want every bite we eat traveling 1,500 miles, and what the myriad costs of that might be. That kind of questioning is new."

Farmers riding the wave of consumer interest in local foods would like to see eating local become a way of life for their customers. Ken Migliorelli of Migliorelli Farm in Rhinebeck, New York, sells fruits and vegetables at 15 farmers' markets in New York City and 10 outside of the city. He also operates a farm stand and does some wholesale.

"My markets both in and out of the city were up between 25 and 30 percent last year," Migliorelli says. "The local foods movement has helped keep my business viable. I have high hopes of this demand staying strong."

Reliable consumer demand provides farmers with some stability and helps them get down to the business of sustainable farming. "What is incumbent upon us now is to transcend trendiness and leverage this heightened

consumer awareness to build systems that allow farmers to raise a family on their land,” says Stacy Miller of the Iowa-based Farmers Market Coalition.

Some advocates see the local foods movement as a path to sustainable economic development. “We get lots of inquiries from communities that want to protect their independence and their economic viability,” says Ann Bartz of the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies in San Francisco, California. “People want to save their withering downtowns and rebuild their local food systems.”

“Farmers’ markets are the fastest growing element of the food economy,” says McKibben. “And the great food has gotten people tasting again which is a great thing.” If urban consumers support farmers’ markets, it is conceivable that their purchases alone can protect farms simply by keeping them in business.

But commerce is not enough in the face of development pressure. “A tremendous amount of food was once produced for the New York City market in the outlying



Bill McKibben

regions,” says Chef Peter Hoffman, owner of Savoy, a SoHo restaurant known for its seasonal menu featuring fresh, locally produced foods. “This still can be true. But more and more people want to live in suburbia and the farmland is being subdivided for development,” which leads to the loss of the landscape and to the region’s food production capacity.

Since 1992, the United States has developed more than one million acres of farmland each year. Of greater concern than

the amount of land lost is that most of the development has occurred on the nation’s highest quality farmland and in areas with the best consumer markets. Land with the best soils—prime farmland—were converted 30 percent faster than any other land. Our food increasingly is in the path of that development: 86 percent of our fruits and vegetables and 63 percent of our dairy products.

“You can’t have the option of local food unless you have farmland in proximity to local food markets,” says Julia Freedgood, director of technical assistance for American Farmland Trust. “Unfortunately a lot of the land being devoured by sprawl is our best farmland. That’s why it is so essential that community efforts to develop local food systems also connect to the land that grows the food.”

According to Migliorelli, educated consumers are beginning to understand this and are spending money at their community farmers’ markets with this goal in mind. “Some of the more savvy customers in the city understand that when they go to a farmers’ market, they are supporting open space,” he says. “They know that when they buy produce directly from a farmer, that dollar is a strong dollar for agriculture.”

Migliorelli and other neighboring farmers got involved with the land conservation group Scenic Hudson in the 1980s and placed seven farms under protection from development for a total of 1,000 acres. “I am a big proponent of farmland protection,” he says. “My farm is 400 acres, 350 of which are protected. I was able to get into fruit farming because I was able to afford to buy a nearby fruit farm with an agricultural easement on it.” Without the easement the Hudson Valley farm would have been sold at a high price for development.

Twenty-seven states, many local municipalities and the federal government now have programs that permanently protect farmland from development, and a few states are starting to link public programs that protect



KELLY CLINE/ISTOCKPHOTO

Farm-to-chef programs are connecting farmers with chefs who want the freshest local ingredients for their restaurants.



ABOVE: DAN MOORE/ISTOCKPHOTO; INSET PHOTO: JASON HOUSTON

farmland with efforts to enhance agricultural viability. Massachusetts' Farm Viability Program, for instance, helps keep farmers on the land while strengthening their business skills.

"I think we need to connect farmland preservation with the community," says McKibben. "I love the efforts farmland and conservation advocates are making not just to preserve land, but to make sure that it is worked in ways that really benefit the community. I drink my daily cider off conserved farmland, and eat bread made with wheat from conserved land."

"Boosting the amount of local food produced, marketed and consumed by just 20 percent annually would significantly increase local food security and strengthen agriculture's many contributions to the quality of life in our communities," says Freedgood. "But these gains will require what we call a 'critical mass' of productive farmland to assure that the natural resource capacity matches the market demand for fresh, local food."

Local food advocates point out that there are many reasons to support locally grown food. Our industrialized system of agriculture uses tremendous quantities of fuel to grow, package and distribute food that needs to travel long distances before reaching your plate. Purchasing food produced by farmers on local farms supports a less energy intensive method of food production and dramatically reduces the fuel consumed during long-distance transport.

A very personal reason to eat locally produced food is simply that it often tastes better. Food traveling long distances sits for extended periods of time in transport and in storage, diminishing its freshness, nutritional value and quality. And perhaps one of the biggest benefits of eating

LOCAL FOOD LINGO



LOCAVORE: a person who exclusively or primarily eats foods produced within a predetermined radius from his or her home ("one who eats with a sense of place"); the *New Oxford American Dictionary's* word of the year in 2007.

FOOD MILES: the distance food travels from its place of production to the place where it is consumed.

100-MILE DIET: a selection of food limited to items that are produced within a 100-mile geographic region in which the consumer lives.

CARBON FOOTPRINT: the total amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere by a product during its lifetime or generated in support of the activity of a human.

FOODSHED: a region where local food is both produced and consumed. A foodshed can be defined in a variety of ways, but generally includes the land that the food grows on and the routes it must travel before ending up on consumers' tables.

NATURAL: food products prepared without the use of artificial flavors or coloring, chemical preservatives or synthetic ingredients and minimally processed in a way that does not fundamentally alter the raw product.

GRASS-FED: a diet for ruminant livestock consisting of nothing other than mother's milk, fresh grass, forage and grass-type hay from birth to slaughter; in addition the livestock must have continuous access to pasture during the growing season.

ORGANIC: a farm product grown without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.

local for consumers is the chance to know the person who grew the food. When a high quality product is backed up by a farmer's direct relationship with the consumer, a bond is created that is hard to break.

"We get a superior quality product when we buy it from people we have a direct relationship with," says Hoffman. "They raise it to be the best it can be with the flavor always in mind. They have to answer to the person they sold it to. They care about all aspects of the quality, not just that it looks the way it is supposed to look."

However, as with many things in life, higher quality often comes at a higher cost. Because of food policies enacted in the first farm bill following the Great Depression and still in place today, Americans enjoy a bountiful supply of good food at incredibly cheap prices. But those policies often don't benefit the small-scale farmers who sell their products at farmers' markets.

For some cooks, the challenges remain even more basic. "I run a school food program that feeds 9,600 kids," says Ann Cooper, also known as Chef Ann or the Renegade Lunch Lady. She is director of nutrition services for Berkeley Unified School District, located in Berkeley, California, and has written *Lunch Lessons*:



Ann Cooper, the "Renegade Lunch Lady"

Changing the Way We Feed Our Children. "Serving local foods is often way down the list of what's important for schools, but the most important thing should be to serve fresh, healthy food."

Yet too often, feeding a family and making buying decisions that support environmental protection and the

HELPING COMMUNITIES GROW LOCAL

American Farmland Trust—along with many states, communities and nonprofit groups—is working to make "growing local" a reality for farmers, ranchers and communities. We are:

PROTECTING FARMLAND. We can't have local food in our communities unless we save the agricultural local base needed to support local farms. AFT leads the nation in the charge to save farmland, from helping state, federal and local governments design, implement and fund farmland protection programs to the stewardship of our own agricultural conservation easements.

PLANNING FOR AGRICULTURE AND FIGHTING SPRAWL. Much of the food we eat is grown in urban-edge counties with population growth rates more than twice the national average, threatening our capacity to obtain fresh and local food. AFT helps communities plan for agriculture and fight sprawl by identifying strategic agricultural resources, promoting policies to direct new development away from our best soils and helping communities develop farm-friendly plans and agricultural economic development strategies.



JASON HOUSTON

PROMOTING CHANGES IN FOOD AND FARM POLICY. Many titles in the federal farm bill have implications for local food production—including nutrition and food assistance programs and also commodity, trade, conservation and rural development programs. In addition to conservation and farmland protection, AFT supports farm profitability grants and other federal programs that encourage innovative marketing strategies, new business ventures, value-added products and agricultural education and promotion.

FINDING NEW MARKETS FOR LOCAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS. In pilot projects like the Lowcountry farm-to-chef program in South Carolina, AFT is helping farmers connect with new markets to benefit producers, consumers and communities. AFT also supports efforts to close the gap between local food production and consumption, including state agricultural viability programs, community-supported agriculture, farmers' markets, farm-to-school programs, food policy councils and local food purchasing policies.

To learn more, visit www.farmland.org

local economy is a luxury not everyone can afford, she says. “Buying local, seasonal and sustainable is great, but when you’re hungry and your kids are hungry sometimes you don’t care where your food comes from.”

The USDA’s Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program is helping some people who normally couldn’t afford to buy fresh food from farmers’ markets. In 2005, 2.6 million participants in the federal nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) received coupons to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs from farmers, farm stands and farmers’ markets. The program also provides coupons to low-income seniors. Changes in the federal farm bill supported by American Farmland Trust could also address issues related to the affordability of local food (visit www.farmland.org/ campaign to learn more).

Issues of wealth and education aside, there is no doubt that many Americans don’t buy locally grown food simply because it is inconvenient. “The biggest obstacle to overcome in the local food movement is people’s unwillingness to go outside the mainstream infrastructure and take the time to seek out local food,” says Jim Sincock, of Colorado Local Sustainability, publisher of the Rocky Mountain Grower’s Directory and based in Boulder, Colorado.

But many groups are working to change that, through public awareness programs that remind consumers of the benefits of locally grown foods and make it easier for shoppers to find out where to go to buy them. Even giant retailers like Wal-Mart and Whole Foods are now getting in the game by launching local food initiatives. In 2006, Whole Foods Supermarket promised “locally grown produce” on its grocery bags and started hanging signs and banners in stores to trumpet the same message. Big and successful enough to pull the rest of the supermarket industry along with it, Whole Foods has begun to require its stores to buy from at least four local farmers.

Re-circulating food dollars within the community helps to strengthen local economies as well as wean people off an industrialized system that is causing significant environmental damage. “If we grew most of our food close to home,” writes McKibben, “we’d use far less energy in the process, helping to alleviate both oil shortages and climate change.”

By purchasing locally produced food, we can choose not to participate in an industrialized food system heavily reliant on a limited supply of fossil fuel. Buying direct from farmers supports the local economy and preserves farmland, which ensures food security for generations to come. “Daily decisions are being made that improve not only daily life but improve the functioning of the economy,” says Hoffman. “Eating high quality meals you

LOCAL FOOD BY THE NUMBERS



1,500: the average distance in miles that food consumed in the United States travels before being eaten

75: the percentage of apples purchased in New York City that are imported from the West Coast or overseas, even though New York state produces 10 times the amount of apples consumed by New York City each year

340: the number of farmers’ markets in the United States in 1970

4,385: the number of farmers’ markets in the United States in 2006

1.1 MILLION: the amount of barrels of oil that could be conserved per week if each U.S. citizen ate one meal a week made from local, organically grown produce

2006: the first year in American history that the value of the food imported into the United States exceeded the value of the food exported from the United States

cook yourself or a chef cooks for you has an impact on the landscape.”

And yet it is even more than this. When we buy a whole chicken or a head of lettuce from a local farmer, we preserve our connection to the land and the natural systems that sustain us. By eating local we participate directly in the age-old human tradition of sowing, cultivating, harvesting and eating—and that is the stuff of life.

LAURA TEN EYCK is a freelance writer based in New Scotland, New York.

SEVEN WAYS FARMERS ARE GROWING LOCAL

Consumers increasingly want to know where their food comes from and are seeking out local farm products. Many farmers and ranchers have responded by finding creative ways to satisfy this burgeoning consumer demand. Here are seven ways that farmers and ranchers are supporting the “growing local” connection:

FARMERS’ MARKETS. Farmers’ markets—which often operate outdoors in public spaces and may be seasonal—represent a traditional way of selling agricultural and home-made products. In the United States, they declined markedly after World War II, but today are enjoying a renaissance. Their resurgence mainly is due to an increased public awareness of the benefits of fresh local food. Depending on what’s in season, they may offer everything from fresh fruits and vegetables to dairy, eggs and meat. Many markets also offer festive and fun activities, from music performances to cooking demonstrations.

FARM STANDS AND ROADSIDE FARMS. Some farmers sell their products straight from their farms at farm stands. Ranging from modest outdoor sheds to elaborate indoor markets, these operations offer customers fresh seasonal food and a way to discover local agricultural products in a friendly atmosphere and convenient location. Farm stands and roadside markets have made a dramatic comeback in recent years.

FARM-TO-CHEF, FARM-TO-STORE AND FARM-TO-SCHOOL. Farm-to-chef programs are linking farmers and ranchers with chefs who want the freshest, highest quality ingredients for their restaurants. Chefs Collaborative, for instance, is a national network of chefs and culinary professionals who work closely with farmers and food producers. Some farmers are contracting directly with store managers who have expanded their produce, meat and dairy sections to accommodate growing consumer demand for local farm products. And farm-to-school programs are connecting local farms with schools, colleges and universities. The programs serve locally produced foods in cafeterias in order to improve nutrition in school lunch programs and educate children about food and farming.

FARM-TO-INSTITUTION. Many initiatives are underway to provide local food to institutional and corporate buyers. Increasingly, corporations are recognizing that the health of their employees is directly related to the health of their diets. Cutting-edge companies like Google now make an effort to serve local foods in their company cafeterias, and some hospitals have started farmers’ markets for their employees and patients (a trend initiated by Kaiser Permanente’s Oakland Medical Center).



JASON HOUSTON

VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE. Many growers of fruits and vegetables and other crops now process their own products on the farm: apple pie from fresh local apples or ice cream made on a dairy farm, for instance. “Value-added” refers to an increase in the value of a food product through processing or marketing. This alternative production and marketing strategy is helping some farmers increase the economic value and appeal of their raw products, although it requires a good understanding of the food industry and food safety issues.

AGRITOURISM AND YOU-PICK OPERATIONS.

Agritourism is a form of eco-tourism that connects vacationers to America’s agricultural heritage, giving people the opportunity to visit or vacation on working farms and ranches. Agritourism is popular in places where farming is still a vital part of the local culture, including wine growing regions and farm destinations such as Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the Kona region of Hawaii and dairy country in Vermont. “Pick-your-own” or “you-pick” operations allow visitors to harvest their own fruit, vegetables, flowers or Christmas trees. And some agritourism farms offer farm-oriented entertainment such as hay rides and corn mazes.

COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA).

A CSA is a special kind of farming operation that sells subscriptions to people who want a personal relationship with a local farm. In exchange, subscribers (also known as members or shareholders) receive a share of the weekly harvest, typically including fresh fruits and vegetables; some now offer flowers and bedding plants, meat, dairy or eggs as well. The first American CSA started in Massachusetts in 1985. Today, there are more than 1,500 in the United States and Canada.

without LOCAL FARMLAND, *it's not* LOCAL FOOD

*AFT is working to bridge the gap between
the farm gate and the dinner plate.*

BY JULIA FREEDGOOD

As America's leading advocate for farm and ranch land conservation, AFT works to protect the best land, keep it healthy and plan for its future. Since 2000, we have been involved in dozens of "planning for agriculture" projects. Our approach joins sustainable agriculture with sustainable development, saving farmland and supporting the people, enterprises and communities that champion farms, farmers and farmland. We bring farmers and ranchers together with local officials, planners, environmentalists and concerned citizens. Through this process, we have found that a powerful way to connect people to farmland is to lead them from the farm gate to the dinner plate.

A burgeoning consumer movement is now promoting sustainable, regional food systems and an increased consumption of local food. These efforts are premised on the idea that increasing the percentage of food grown,

processed and consumed locally provides significant public benefits. What many of them neglect, however, is the absolutely critical role of securing a base of local farmland to produce the food, while fostering a vibrant agricultural economy to sustain that production.

That's where AFT comes in. AFT is making the case that "It's not local food without local farmland." In California, AFT is studying whether it is possible for residents of San Francisco to feed themselves exclusively from sustainable farms located within 100 miles of the Golden Gate Bridge. With a Mediterranean climate, high quality farmland and a powerful agricultural economy, farmers surrounding San Francisco should be able to produce nearly every kind of food consumed and enjoyed in the Bay Area. However, the farmland that supports this food production is some of the most threatened in the country—threatened not only

JASON HOUSTON





by development but also from economic forces that make local farmers vulnerable to a global market they cannot control.

This threatened “foodshed” includes the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, one of California’s first regions opened to large-scale agriculture. It also includes the fertile Santa Clara and Salinas valleys to the south and the Sonoma Valley to the north—a region targeted by much of AFT’s California work. Here, AFT is evaluating consumption patterns and assessing the potential for local farms to supply high-quality, healthy food to the city. We are also looking for strategies to encourage the production and purchase of local food by people and institutions and making sure that low-income consumers can afford the food. AFT has partnered on this project with a host of Bay Area institutions that recognize the importance of local food from the region’s farms.

Across the country in Burlington County, New Jersey, AFT is working with the county’s Office of Farmland Preservation to support the increasing demand for locally grown food. Burlington County is in close proximity to New York City and Philadelphia, with boundaries stretching from the Atlantic Ocean through the Pine Barrens, part of a 1.1 million acre national reserve—the largest body of open space on the Mid-Atlantic seaboard. Like California’s Bay Area, Burlington County’s farms are threatened by residential and commercial development that is making it harder for farms growing traditional agricultural commodities to compete with the price of land. This is true even though the county boasts one of the state’s strongest agricultural economies and is nationally recognized for its innovative farmland preservation program.

The county took the first step to enhance the viability of its agricultural industry by completing a plan for agriculture in 2004. This newest project with AFT is the next step—turning the challenges of high land values and land use conflicts into more opportunities for direct marketing, value-added agriculture and a strengthened local food and farming system.

New Jersey is a “home rule” state with land use authority resting in the hands of townships and boroughs. Each of Burlington County’s 15 townships has its own municipal codes and ordinances. While the county has some “power of the purse,” it lacks regulatory authority. These codes and ordinances vary from municipality to municipality, making it difficult for local farmers to connect directly with local consumers. AFT is working in three representative townships to identify barriers and address them by creating a model ordinance to support local farmers and a local food system that is accessible to all county residents. Our involvement is meant to build local capacity so that the county will be able to continue the work beyond our direct involvement and assistance—with the hope that Burlington County will serve as a model for the rest of the state and potentially the region.

For communities in all parts of the country, here are five reasons to support local food:

1. **Economic development.** Increasing the percentage of food grown, processed and consumed locally provides significant economic benefits to a region.
2. **Public health.** The local production, distribution and consumption of food—especially fruits and vegetables—can counter obesity by providing children, elders and others with greater access to fresh and nutritious foods.
3. **Agricultural viability.** Closing the gap between local production and local consumption of food can increase profitability for producers, helping to preserve farm operations and farmland.
4. **Environmental quality.** Local food systems promote sustainable agricultural management practices and natural resource conservation.
5. **Homeland security.** Because they rely on local farmland and provide an added incentive for protecting it, local food systems help maintain homeland security in the face of globalization, climate change and the threat of energy and economic disruptions.

JULIA FREEDGOOD is the director of AFT’s technical assistance services in Northampton, Massachusetts.

a 'MAJOR' OPPORTUNITY *for* YOUNG FARMERS

The next generation of organic farmers—and local food growers—is learning their craft through a new program at Washington State University.

BY CAROL MILANO
PHOTOS BY BRUCE ANDRE

When his advisor, John Reganold, mentioned that Washington State University was considering a new major in organic agriculture systems, Will Hollingbery replied, "If that happens, I want to get on board." In May, Hollingbery will graduate as one of the first WSU students to complete a B.S. in the nation's first major in organic agriculture.

Reganold, Regents Professor of Soil Science in the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, had been researching organic agriculture since 1985. While developing an introductory course on organic farming, the idea of a major struck him. "I knew we had students who wanted to be involved with [the organic movement] and I wanted to get more students involved with agriculture," recalls Reganold, well aware that the average age of American farmers is now above 55.



In mid-2002, he mentioned his idea at a departmental faculty meeting. “Go do it, put a curriculum together,” peers encouraged. Over the next 18 months, Reganold met with colleagues in landscape architecture, horticulture, crop and soil sciences, plant pathology, entomology, food science, human nutrition, animal science, integrated pest management and economics. After a national market research survey confirmed adequate interest for an organic agriculture major, Reganold began to meld a multi-department curriculum. He found ample support: over 50 WSU faculty members identify themselves as “working in organic agriculture.”

With existing courses, each professor had to agree to incorporate organic agriculture into at least 10 to 15 percent of the syllabus. “It’s a science-based major—you’re not just outside growing plants,” stresses Reganold, who wove chemistry, biology, math and statistics requirements into the curriculum. He developed two new soil sciences courses: “Organic Agriculture and Farming” and “Practicum in Organic Agriculture.” The new major was approved in mid-2006.

Interest was immediate. On-campus flyers and publicity drew some WSU students who weren’t yet sure of their major but decided to choose organic agriculture. Others, in food science or horticulture, for instance, opted for a double major. National coverage, including the Associated Press, attracted wider attention. “Organic agriculture is popular, and we were the first and only,” Reganold points out. “Some people coming from farms wanted to learn organic agriculture methods.”

After 18 months, the program has 16 majors; Reganold would like to have 40 to 50, eventually. Students include 30-somethings who left jobs because they’d rather work in the organic farming field. Many are younger and from the Northwest. “Some students simply want to be organic farmers. If their family farm is traditional, they want to bring organic methods. Two students want to start CSAs,” Reganold reports. Others want to target the restaurant business, possibly as a buyer purchasing all their food organically and locally. A prospective certifier wants to work with farms, showing them how they can be legally organic. Two double majors in viticulture hope to manage, or eventually own, an organic vineyard.

Hollingbery grew up on a Yakima Valley orchard. “I know a lot about fruit production, but I don’t like conventional farming because of the chemicals and what they do to the environment,” he emphasizes. “Organic farming is



WSU student Julie Sullivan

much more interesting! I’ll have to be more attentive to what’s going on in the orchard. I’m learning integrated practices to manage pests, insects, and weeds without chemical sprays, and figuring out non-synthetic ways of fertilization,” says the senior.

His hands-on learning for two summers was in a credit course at WSU’s three-acre organic farm, which runs a CSA program for 100 local families. “I’d take vegetables back to my parents, who both felt they were the best vegetables they’d ever eaten, especially my dad. By feeding them organic products, I sold them on the concept.”

The program requires an internship. In 2007, one student arranged her own, at an organic grape vineyard in France. For 2008, a Willamette Valley organic farm offers “rustic but comfortable housing, a stipend and all the vegetables you can eat,” plus the chance to “start a seed and follow it all the way to the point of sale.” After graduation, Hollingbery’s internship in Salan, Washington, will afford his first experience at an organic orchard. “I want to learn about the needs and soil management so I can eventually help my dad because he’s now interested in it, too,” he explains.

Don Stuart, AFT’s Pacific Northwest States Director, calls WSU’s program “a great boost to organic agriculture, in Washington and nationally. With over 250 diverse crops of fruits and vegetables that are direct-marketed, it’s logical for this state to take a leadership interest. And if anyone’s doing it, it should be a land grant institution. WSU should be congratulated.

“Organic agriculture is here to stay! It’s a healthy, strong, important direction. We need to support it,” Stuart declares. “I feel that for agriculture to be economically sustainable, it also has to be environmentally and politically sustainable.” He considers organic agriculture a hothouse, helping to show the way toward improved integrated pest management that will help all of agriculture. Convinced that public support will help bring protection for farms, Stuart believes improved knowledge and sustainability anywhere in agriculture can help the entire industry.

“I’m seeing agriculture going in two directions—large conventional corporate farms, and small local organic farms,” observes Hollingbery. “The middle ground is quickly disappearing. It’s a matter of my deciding what I want to be part of. And I totally want to be working on my own farm, seeing people eat my food.”

CAROL MILANO is a freelance writer based in Brooklyn, New York.

New Markets for Environmental Services Hold Promise for Rural Communities

BY DON STUART

IN WASHINGTON STATE, where I live, about two-thirds of our private lands are engaged in active agriculture or forestry. These industries remain the economic mainstays of our rural communities. But in the next 100 years, the Pacific Northwest is expected to grow by five times our current population. With all those new people, environmental problems will continue to worsen. And laws protecting the environment will become even more stringent than they are today.

Pressures from the region's growth highlight a dilemma: Will the expense of complying with intensifying environmental regulation drive our state's private farm and forest landowners out of business? Or will society value the environmental services provided by farmers and foresters and find the means to pay for those services? In the latter case, we could see a resurgence of rural prosperity linked to preservation of the rural character, economies and environment that our region treasures.

But if society is to pay rural landowners to produce environmental benefits, where will the money come from? One answer is that we are already buying environmental services from our landowners—albeit in a limited way. Current conservation programs available through our conservation districts and the USDA are, in effect, payments to landowners for producing environmental services. So is the public money going for salmon recovery projects on private lands, for supporting bird habitat on active farms or protecting farmland from development.

Then consider the fact that development is already paying heavily to

mitigate for its impacts. Just in the Puget Sound area, some \$350 million is now spent annually for environmental mitigation related to public transportation projects. Suppose we amended the rules so that even a small percentage of those millions could be paid instead to farmers or foresters willing to manage their operations to improve environmental performance? We might greatly improve our cost-effectiveness and provide valuable new markets for our farm and forest landowners.

The world market for carbon sequestration is another example. Carbon markets already pay some farmers for using conservation practices like direct seeding. Their reductions in carbon emissions help other industries mitigate for their own emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming. In the years to come, this market is likely to broaden to other agricultural and forestry practices and will almost certainly strengthen.

Or consider water quality trading. The federal Clean Water Act is now placing "total maximum daily load" limits on pollution contributions to key local water bodies. Municipalities, private industries and other sources of pollution are looking for less expensive ways to make up for their impacts. One of their best opportunities is to pay landowners to reduce the pollution involved in their farm or forestry activities.

The purchase and transfer of development rights also provide such a market. These programs pay farm and forest landowners to forgo development and to keep their land in natural resource production. They prevent the



Don Stuart

environmental benefits of farming and forestry from being lost and the impacts of sprawl from worsening.

And private industry is also involved. Both consumers and

investors are increasingly concerned about the environmental impacts of the companies their dollars support. Many large corporations have programs that purchase conservation stewardship elsewhere to make-up for the unavoidable impacts of their activities. This reduces their environmental footprint and increases the appeal of their products and their stocks.

All of these possibilities are referred to as "ecosystem services markets." Interest in such markets is growing. They are being explored by federal agencies, environmental planners and by many of our counties, cities and other local governments. Rural communities and farm and forest landowners need to be involved, because many questions are yet to be answered about who will benefit in such marketplaces and whether the system will be open and fair.

Securing the right answers will not occur without active involvement by farm and forest landowners and by organizations with rural roots. If such organizations do become involved and if these new programs are well designed to serve the needs of landowners, than ecosystem services markets could help secure a stable and prosperous future for our nation's rural communities.

DON STUART is the director of AFT's Pacific Northwest office in Seattle, Washington.

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*AFT gratefully acknowledges
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 of Philanthropy (AIP)
 has designated
 American Farmland
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 prominent charity watchdog service whose
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 giving decisions. For more information, visit
www.charitywatch.org.

Farm Fresh Recipe

FOR DECADES, chef Peter Hoffman has sourced the ingredients for his New York City restaurant Savoy from local farmers. Buying directly from producers has given Hoffman an understanding of how farming practices impact flavor and taste. He is a spokesman and writer on many of the complex issues facing our nation's food system, authoring articles for the *New York Times* and various food publications. The national chair of Chef's Collaborative, an organization that educates chefs about sustainable food choices, Hoffman is currently at

work on a book recounting a year of shopping at farmers' markets.



Peter Hoffman

farm fresh

Roots and Shoots

- 1 pound beets
- 1 bunch scallions or young leeks
- ½ cup coriander
- ½ cup flat parsley
- 2 cloves garlic, fine mince
- Juice of half lemon
- 1 teaspoon ginger, fine mince
- Pinch pimenton (Spanish smoked paprika) or paprika
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt

Roast the beets in a moderate oven by placing them in a roasting pan, rubbing them with a bit of oil and salt and then covering the pan with aluminum foil. Roast for 45 minutes or until a knife passes easily through the beets. When cool, rub off the skins and hold. In a pot of boiling salted water, quickly blanch the scallions into the water and leave for no more than two minutes. Immediately plunge into iced water. This quick cooking and quick chilling retains the bright green of the scallion. Remove from the water and squeeze out the excess.

FOR THE DRESSING:

Put ginger and garlic in a food processor. Add salt and lemon juice. Add herbs. Pulse the machine but don't over-puree. Add oil. Taste for seasoning.

To make the salad, cut the beets in wedges. Cut the scallions into 2-3 inch long pieces and arrange on top of the beets. Drizzle the dressing over the beets and around the plate.



Early spring is a challenging moment for the seasonal cook in the Northeast. Days have warmed and we rejoice in wearing lighter clothes, but the soil hasn't yielded a whole lot of new produce yet. Expecting fruit from our plants is a little unrealistic so early in the season, so this is the time of the year to focus on shoots, stems and leaves. To give a dish a little more body, though, we can combine it with a few vegetables still in the root cellars, whether they are still lingering in our vegetable bins or stored over winter by our farmers. In this recipe, I've combined roasted beets and scallions with a very herbal dressing, made from first growth parsley and coriander.

— Peter Hoffman, Savoy

AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST

The mission of American Farmland Trust is to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment. As the nation's leading advocate for farm and ranch land conservation, AFT works with communities and individuals to protect the best land, plan for agriculture and keep the land healthy.

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